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Rajnath, Sullivan talk 'key' strategic matters

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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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From despair to hope: A woman's fight for survival amid Gaza's devastation

SALAR EXCLUSIVE

REHA FATHIMA

"Sometimes I wish someone would call 'cut!' and tell me this is just a film. But it's not. It's our reality," said Noor Ali Abu Nadaa, a 31-year-old Palestinian teacher, mother of three and a war widow. She told Salar News about her story of devastation, resilience and hope in Gaza. On 7 October, 2023, Noor's world was forever altered as Israel began its assault against Gaza. Like for many in Gaza, the initial days were of fear and hope. As the war progressed, what was thought as a mere trial became a nightmarish reality, which resulted in the loss of her husband, Bilal.

—Salar News

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CENTRE GIVES NOD TO UNIFIED PENSION SCHEME

Scheme assures 50% of salary as pension for govt workers

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

Union Cabinet on Saturday approved an assured 50 per cent of salary as pension for 23 lakh government employees who joined service under the National Pension System (NPS).

The National Pension System is applicable for government employees joining the service after 1 April, 2004. It was based on the premise of contribution rather than defined benefit applicable for employees prior to the NPS.

Announcing Cabinet decisions, Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) announced that government employees will now be eligible to get 50 per cent of the average basic pay drawn over the last 12 months before the superannuation as pension.

The benefits of the Unified Pension Scheme are applicable for those retired and retiring till 31 March, 2025 ***PHOTO: PTI***

For this full pension or 50 per cent of pay as the pension, he said, the eligibility service length will be 25 years.

However, he said, it would be proportionate for a lesser service period up to a minimum of 10 years of service.

NPS subscribers can now opt for the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS), which offers assured pension applicable from the beginning of the next financial year.

Last year, the finance ministry set up a committee under Finance Secretary TV Somanathan to review the pension scheme for government employees and suggest any changes, if needed, in light of the existing framework and structure of the National Pension System.

Briefing media, Cabinet Secretary-designate TV Somanathan said the new scheme is applicable from 1 April, 2025.

The benefits of the Unified Pension Scheme are applicable for those retired and retiring till 31 March, 2025, with arrears, he added. The Union Cabinet approved the "BioE3" (Biotechnology for Economy, Environment and Employment) policy for fostering high-performance bio-manufacturing of the Department of Biotechnology..

—PTI

TROUBLED WATERS

People try pulling out a car stuck in a waterlogged area after water released from the Khadakwasla Dam caused flood concerns following heavy rainfall, in Pune, Maharashtra, on Saturday. ***PHOTO: PTI***

'TRIPURA FLOODS CAUSE DAMAGES WORTH ₹15K CR'

AGARTALA, 24 AUG

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Saturday said the unprecedented floods in the state have caused an estimated loss of Rs 15,000 crore, affecting infrastructure, agriculture, and other property. At least 24 people died due to the floods since Monday while 1.28 lakh have taken shelters in 557 relief camps, officials said. "The scale of devastation is immense, and the estimated loss could reach Rs 15,000 crore. This figure may increase after a final assessment of the actual damage," Saha said following an all-party meeting. Saha said the floods have triggered 2,588 landslides and damaged 1,603 electric posts. *—PTI*

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COPS ARREST 2

Woman drugged, raped by Instagram friend in Karkala

UDUPI, 24 AUG

A 24-year-old woman was allegedly kidnapped, drugged and raped after being taken to a secluded place in Karkala in the district, police said on Saturday.

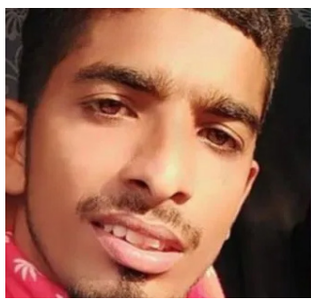
The incident was reported from Karkala town police station limit on the night of 23 August, they said.

The victim, hailing from Karkala, was allegedly kidnapped by one Althaf and taken to a secluded place in a car, and raped, police said.

According to the Udupi Superintendent of Police, Arun K, the woman and Althaf had been friends on Instagram for the last three months and both belonged to the same town. On Friday, Althaf had come to the woman's workplace and allegedly kidnapped her in a car.

After some time, another accomplice of Althaf, Richard Cardoza, joined them. Althaf was having some liquor bottles and forced the woman to drink.

According to a complaint lodged by the woman and her family, Althaf had laced the drink and forced her to drink it. He later allegedly raped her and dropped her back at her house. The police have since arrested both Althaf and Cardoza and seized the vehicles involved. Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara said, "There are attempts by BJP to paint the incident and give it a love jihad touch, but crime is a crime and the government will go to the bottom of it all to unearth the truth and bring the accused to the book, the police in Udupi district have already arrested two main accused and I have told the police to speed up the investigation." *—PTI*



Althaf ***PHOTO: SCREENGRAB***

CBI probes corruption at WB hospital

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

The CBI on Saturday took over the case of alleged financial irregularities at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata during the tenure of former principal Sandip Ghosh, officials said. The action came on the directions of the Calcutta High Court which transferred the probe to the agency from a state-constituted SIT. CBI collected necessary documents from the SIT on Saturday and proceeded to re-register the FIR. The High Court which had already handed over the probe into the rape and murder of the medico also transferred this probe. *>>>More on Page 3*

Cognizant sues Infosys over trade secrets in US

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

IT major Cognizant's subsidiary TriZetto has slapped a lawsuit on Infosys in a US federal court, accusing the Bengaluru-headquartered company of stealing trade secrets and information related to healthcare insurance software. Infosys, in a statement, denied all allegations. The company asserted it is aware of the lawsuit and will defend its position in the court.

—PTI

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Cheetahs to roam freely in Kuno after 1 year in enclosure

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

African cheetahs brought to India as part of the world's first intercontinental translocation of big cats will soon roam free again in the wild, nearly a year after they were returned to enclosures in Madhya Pradesh's Kuno National Park for health check-ups and monitoring, according to officials.

Officials said that the Centre's Cheetah Project Steering Committee decided on Friday to release the African cheetahs and their cubs, born in India, into the wild in a phased manner after the monsoon withdraws from central parts of the country. *—PTI*

Will support Cong, NC if PDP agenda is met: Mehbooba

SRINAGAR, 24 AUG

People's Democratic Party (PDP) will extend complete support to Congress-NC alliance and leave all seats in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections to the coalition if it is ready to accept the party's agenda, PDP Chief Mehbooba Mufti said on Saturday.

Mehbooba also ruled out an alliance with BJP, with which PDP had earlier run a coalition government. She said the dignity of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, which "was being trampled on", was important for her party.

—PTI

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Chevron to invest ₹8,300 crore in K'taka

BENGALURU, 24 AUG

Chevron, a global leader in providing energy solutions, on Saturday announced an investment of Rs 8,300 crore to set up its Engineering and Innovation Centre of Excellence here.

The investment was announced during a high-profile meeting attended by the Karnataka Minister for Large and Medium Industries and Infrastructure Development, M B Patil and others.

According to a statement shared by the Minister's office, the centre will hire 600 engineers by 2025 in engineering and digital services to accelerate energy system technology innovations. The state has taken exemplary steps to promote technological progress through progressive policies that have created an enabling environment for innovation. The minister noted that Bengaluru is already home to more than 500 Global Competence Centres (GCCs) and accounts for more than 30 per cent of India's GCCs, including finance, healthcare, retail, manufacturing and other sectors.

The investment was announced during a high-profile meeting attended by Karnataka Minister MB Patil ***PHOTO: X/@MBPATIL***

Chevron Centre of Excellence (ENGINE) will create significant employment opportunities for local professionals. It will allow them to respond to the challenge of meeting current global energy demands and contribute to the production of clean, low-carbon fuels in the future, the statement said.

Patil explained the Chevron team that will be operating here will execute complex global operations and energy projects in collaboration with international stakeholders. *—PTI*

Opening great 'Gabbar' bids adieu to cricket

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

Veteran India opener Shikhar Dhawan announced his retirement from all forms of cricket, two years after he last donned the national jersey. The 38-year-old said he leaves the scene a content man, having represented the national team in all three formats since making his international debut in 2010 in an ODI against Australia in Visakhapatnam. "As I close this chapter of my cricketing journey, I carry with me countless memories and gratitude. Thank you for the love and support! Jai Hind!," Dhawan said in a post on 'X'. "It's important to turn the page to move forward in life and that's why I am announcing my retirement from international and domestic cricket. I am leaving with peace in my heart that I played so long for India," he added. *—PTI*

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US to sell $52.8M worth of anti-submarines to India

WASHINGTON DC, 24 AUG

The United States Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, has approved a possible foreign military sale of Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) Sonobuoys and related equipment to India at an estimated cost of USD 52.8 million. Reportedly, India might use this for its MH-60R Seahawk helicopters.

The Defence Security Cooperation Agency delivered the required certification, notifying US Congress of this possible sale, the US Defence Security Cooperation Agency said in a release. "India has requested to buy AN/SSQ-53G High Altitude Anti-Submarine Warfare (HAASW) sonobuoys; AN/SSQ-62F HAASW sonobuoys; AN/SSQ-36 sonobuoys; technical and publications and data documentation; US Government and contractor engineering and technical support; and other related elements of logistics and program services and support," the agency stated. A sonobuoy is a crucial tool used in anti-submarine warfare and underwater acoustic research. ASW helicopters are deployed ahead of warships to drop sonobuoys into the water to detect enemy submarines' positions and they help to fire missiles and torpedoes. Subsequently, they can take necessary offensive actions by firing missiles and torpedoes. Sonobuoys serve various purposes including chokepoint monitoring and wide-area search. *—ANI*

VILLAGERS REFUSE BURIAL

Assam rape accused jumps into pond, dies

GUWAHATI, 24 AUG

The prime accused in the rape of a minor girl allegedly escaped from police custody, jumped into a pond and died on Saturday morning at Dhing in Assam's Nagaon district, police said.

The villagers of Borbheti, the family home of the accused, have taken a decision not to participate in his funeral prayers and not allow his burial in the village graveyard.

Nagaon Superintendent of Police Swapneel Deka told reporters that the accused, who was arrested on Friday, was taken handcuffed to the location where the crime was allegedly committed for a re-creation of the crime scene around 3.30 am.

The prime accused escaped from police custody and jumped into a pond and died ***PHOTO: ANI***

"The accused hit out at a policeman, escaped from police custody and jumped into the pond", Deka said. The State Disaster Response Force was immediately informed and his body was recovered after nearly two hours, he added. The other two accused are still absconding and search was continuing with raids conducted at several places on Friday night. The 14-year-old girl was allegedly raped by three persons while she was returning home from tuition on her bicycle at Dhing on Thursday.

She was left injured and unconscious on the roadside near a pond, before being rescued by locals who informed police. ''The village youth's crime has shamed us and we cannot allow his burial in the community graveyard'', a villager Md Shahjahan Ali Choudhury said. Meanwhile, a march was also taken out from the village mosque to protest against the incident. *—PTI*

BBMP imposes meat ban for Janmashtami

BENGALURU, 24 AUG

Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has announced a prohibition on the slaughter of animals and the sale of meat in Bengaluru on Monday. The Joint Director of Animal Husbandry N Somashekar said this step has been taken in view of Krishna Janmashtami. Somashekar said that this will be observed to show respect the religious sentiments associated with the festival. Authorities said it will take strict action if it is violated. *—Salar News*

BJP urges CM to release report on Arkavathi layout

BENGALURU, 24 AUG

Former BJP national general secretary and MLC CT Ravi on Saturday requested Governor Thawarchand Gehlot to instruct Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to make public Justice Kempanna's report about the Arkavathi layout controversy on corruption allegations and illegal denotification. In a letter addressed to the Governor, he said he would like to draw attention to the Arkavathi layout controversy concerning 852 acres of "re-do" or denotification carried out by the previous Congress administration, which is estimated to be valued at approximately Rs 8,000 crore. "In 2014, Siddaramaiah, currently serving as the Chief Minister of Karnataka, appointed Justice Kempanna to lead the Inquiry Commission as per the Commission of Inquiry Act of 1952. Justice Kempanna has since submitted his findings to the government," it stated. According to him, judicial inquiry reports are deemed public documents, and it is the government's obligation to ensure they are accessible to the public. *—PTI*

Why is ED mum on Valmiki Scam? asks Rama Rao

HYDERABAD, 24 AUG

Bharat Rashtra Samiti (BRS) working President KT Rama Rao on Saturday, raised questions on "Enforcement Directorate's (ED) silence" on Valmiki scam, saying "who is protecting Congress here." KTR, in a post on X, listed out a series of questions related to the Valmiki scam and asked, "Why is the ED silent in Telangana even after getting substantial leads? Who is protecting Congress here?" The Valmiki scam pertains to the alleged illegal transfer of funds by the Siddaramiah-led Government in the State from the Maharshi Valmiki ST Corporation, which is charged with implementing welfare programmes for scheduled tribe members. ED investigation had earlier revealed that the ST corporation money was diverted to fake accounts in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. *—ANI*

Sci560 exhibition opens at Science Gallery in City

BENGALURU, 24 AUG

Science Gallery Bengaluru on Saturday announced a new exhibition season that delves into City's rich history as India's premier military-industrial-academic complex. The exhibition -- Sci560, is born from the collaborative efforts of ten city-wide institutions and Science Gallery Bengaluru (SGB), and is supported by Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies. Minister for Science and Technology NS Boseraju officially inaugurated the Sci560 exhibition season on Saturday, declaring it open to public. According to SGB, the name 'Sci560' combines Bengaluru's pin code, which starts with 560, with 'sci' to highlight the exhibition's focus on science. The name also subtly evokes 'sci-fi', connecting the City's scientific history with a sense of exploration and innovation for the future. According to SGB officials, Sci560 will be a hybrid exhibition that will be activated by public programmes every weekend. *—PTI*

'Cong top brass told about row in State'

CM says Cabinet will discuss Guv sending bills back

BENGALURU, 24 AUG

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Saturday said the Congress high command had been explained about the recent political developments in the State, and the prosecution sanction against him by the Governor, which he termed as "anti-Constitution and illegal". He also said the Governor sending some Bills back to the government will be discussed in the Cabinet and the next course of action will be decided at the meeting.

Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, who is also State Congress chief, and several senior ministers met AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi in New Delhi on Friday, and held discussions. Asked whether any discussion happened regarding complaining to the President against the Governor, Siddaramaiah said, "no....all options are open."

Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot on 16 August granted sanction for prosecution of Siddaramaiah in connection with the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) site allotment 'scam', giving a major jolt to the nearly 15-month-old Congress government. *—PTI*

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Minister HK Patil, at Gandhi Bhavan in Bengaluru on Saturday *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

It is tragedy that educated are becoming casteist, says CM

BENGALURU, 24 AUG

Warning that inequality will increase as society is being divided in the name of religion and caste, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Saturday said it is a tragedy that educated people are increasingly becoming casteist.The Chief Minister was speaking after inaugurating an international symposium "Mahatma Gandhi for the 21st Century" organised at Gandhi Bhavan to commemorate the 75th year of the Gandhi Memorial Fund. He alleged that "the nurturers of caste inequality killed Mahatma Gandhi." *—PTI*

'Cong playing musical chair to replace CM'

Ashoka hints at possibility of change in power

BENGALURU, 24 AUG

Leader of Opposition in Karnataka Assembly R Ashoka on Saturday said discussions are on within the ruling Congress about replacement for Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, and a "musical chair" was going on among senior leaders and ministers within the party, including Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, for the top job.

The BJP leader's comments have come amidst reports that the Congress is said to have discussed the possibility of a leadership change in the State, depending on future developments surrounding the threat of an investigation looming over Siddaramaiah, following the Governor granting sanction for prosecution against him.

Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar, who is also state Congress chief, and several senior ministers met AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi in New Delhi on Friday, and held discussions.

R Ashoka said, "DK Shivakumar,G Parameshwara, MB Patil, Satish Jarkiholi, Zameer Ahmed Khan, KJ Gerorge (all ministers), also Kharge's (Mallikarjun Kharge) name has come into picture out of nowhere -- all of them are going around like a musical chair."

Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot on 16 August granted sanction for prosecution of Siddaramaiah in connection with the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) site allotment 'scam', giving a major jolt to the nearly 15 month old Congress government.

The Governor accorded sanction under Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 and Section 218 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 for the commission of the alleged offences as mentioned in the petitions of activists Pradeep Kumar SP, TJ Abraham and Snehamayi Krishna. *—PTI*

BJP President BY Vijayendra, party national Secretary Rituraj Sinha. State incharge Sudhakar Reddy and Leader of Oppositon R Ashoka at Palace Ground in Bengaluru on Saturday *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

- The BJP leader's comments have come amidst reports that the Congress is said to have discussed the possibility of a leadership change in the State, depending on future developments surrounding the threat of an investigation looming against CM

SIT files chargesheet against Revanna & son

BENGALURU, 24 AUG

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the Criminal Investigation Department has filed a chargesheet against former MP Prajwal Revanna for rape and his father and MLA HD Revanna for sexual harassment.

The SIT, which is probing four cases against Prajwal, said the over 2,000-page chargesheet comprises the statements of about 150 witnesses.

The chargesheet, submitted in a special court for public representatives, pertains to one of the cases involving alleged sexual assault on a domestic help of the family.

The chargesheet contains spot inspection, biological, physical, scientific, mobile, digital and other relevant evidences which were gathered.

While the MLA Revanna, who is son of former Prime Minister and JD(S) supremo HD Deve Gowda, has been charged with section 354 and 354 (A) of the IPC, his 33-year-old son Prajwal has been booked under sections 376, 376 (2)(K), 354, 354(A) and 354(B) of the IPC.

The first complaint against the father-son duo was registered based on a complaint by the domestic help at their residence.

Prajwal had contested the recent Lok Sabha election as an NDA candidate from Hassan and lost.

Ahead of the second phase of the Lok Sabha election on 26 April, a huge cache of explicit videos emerged on social media showing many women being sexually assaulted, allegedly by Prajwal. *—PTI*

WELCOMING KRISHNA

Ahead of Krishna Janmashtami celebrations on Monday, vendors selling Lord Krishna idols have set up stalls in various parts of Bengaluru. *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

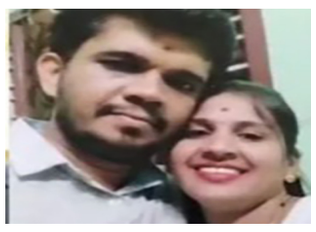


PHOTO: SALAR

MAN WHO KILLED WIFE OVER REEL ADDICTION HELD

UDUPI, 24 AUG

A temple cook was arrested at Karkada near Saligrama in Udupi district on Saturday for allegedly killing his wife over her addiction to make reels for social media.

Jayashree, 31, a native of Donagapura in Bidar, and Kiran Upadhya, 44, were married for eight months and they were staying at a rented house at Karkada, Udupi Additional Superintendent of Police ST Siddalingappa said.

Jayashree regularly made reels, sometimes featuring her and husband, and posted them on social media, police said. The couple's relationship began to strain when people began making fun of them and Upadhya cautioned her to stop making reels, police said. Jayashree was also addicted to online shopping using her husband's debit and credit cards. She often fought with Upadhya demanding luxuries such as a posh house and a high-end car, according to a complaint filed by Upadhya's family members.

After the murder on Friday night, Upadhya tried to bury his wife's body but dropped the plan. He called up his friends and relatives and said his wife had slipped and fell from the first floor of the house, police said. She was taken to Government Hospital in Udupi where doctors declared her dead on arrival. However, Upadhya confessed to the crime during interrogation. *—Salar News*

Yeshwantpur-SMVT route to get BMTC bus

BENGALURU, 24 AUG

Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) will launch a new bus route between Yeshwantpur TTMC and Sir M Visvesvaraya Terminal (SMVT) railway station in Baiyappanahalli from Monday.

The route number 300-R will cover vital transit points such as Cantonment Railway Station, East Railway Station and Maruti Seva Nagar, a statement from BMTC said. "This bus route is introduced to offer reliable and frequent services, especially for those relying on public transport to reach Bengaluru's railway stations," Sunitha B Jayappa, BMTC's Public Relations told **Salar News**. The 300-R route will operate 12 trips daily in both directions, from 5am to 9.30pm.

BMTC's recent expansions come amid a significant increase in ridership. During the first seven months of 2024, the average number of passengers per bus rose by 33 per cent, reaching 675 daily compared to 507 last year, at the same period of time. *—Salar News*

Power failure hits Green Line Metro

BENGALURU, 24 AUG

Metro services on the Green Line of Namma Metro faced disruption due to a power failure between Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Station, Majestic, and Srirampura on Saturday. The interruption occurred abruptly, causing trains to halt unexpectedly, leaving passengers stranded mid-route.

The services were affected from 4.11pm to 4.23pm, during which short-loop services were arranged between Nagasandra and Rajajinagar, and National College and Silk Institute metro stations. The disruption particularly affected commuters travelling between Majestic and Mahakavi Kuvempu Road stations. Commuters took to social media to express their frustrations. Kiran C Karunakaran commented on X, "I feel bad repeating it, but BMRCL seems to operate from another universe where everyone is incompetent." Another user, Naveen Babu V, said, "Should provide some info/announcement for tech problems." *—Salar News*

IMD warns of heavy rain in State on Sunday, Monday

BENGALURU, 24 AUG

India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast heavy to very heavy rainfall in select districts of State on Sunday and Monday.

An orange alert has been sounded for Udupi, Uttar Kannada, Shivamogga, Belagavi, Vijayapura, Kalaburagi and Yadgir districts on 25 and 26 August, indicating the possibility of downpours.

A yellow alert has been issued for Dakshina Kannada, Chikkamagaluru, Bagalkot, and Raichur districts on the same dates, warning of moderately heavy rainfall.

Widespread downpours are anticipated in coastal Karnataka, particularly Udupi and Uttar Kannada. The hilly regions, including Shivamogga and Chikkamagaluru districts, are also likely to experience significant rainfall, raising concerns about possible landslides and flash floods.

IMD has advised fishermen along the coastal districts of Uttara Kannada, Dakshina Kannada and Udupi not to venture into the sea during this period.

Strong winds, ranging from 45 kmph to 65 kmph, are expected to create turbulent sea waves, making marine activities extremely risky.

Meanwhile, Bengaluru and its surrounding areas are expected to see cloudy skies and moderate rainfall on Sunday and Monday. However, the City has not been placed under an orange or yellow alert. *—Salar News*

WEIGHS 5,560 KG

Abhimanyu heaviest of Dasara jumbos

MYSURU, 24 AUG

Abhimanyu is the heaviest among the first batch of nine elephants which are now housed on Mysuru Palace premises for Dasara festival. Abhimanyu, which carries the golden 'howdah' during Vijayadashami procession, weighed 5,560 kilograms, up from 5,160kg a year ago. Elephants Gopi and Lakshmi have lost weight compared to last year.

The nine Dasara elephants, which entered Mysuru Palace after their arrival from Veeranhosahalli in Nagarahole Tiger Reserve to take part in Dasara festivities, underwent weight checking on Saturday. A lorry weighbridge on Dhanvantari Road in Mysuru was used for the purpose.

Gopi weighed 4,970kg this year against 5,080kg last year, Dhananjaya weighed 5,155kg, Bhima 4,945 kg, Kanjan 4,515 kg, Ekalavya 4,730kg, Varalakshmi 3,495kg, Lakshmi 2,480kg and Rohith 3,625kg.

Earlier in the day, the elephants were taken from Mysuru Palace premises to the weighbridge at Dhanvantri Road covering a distance of over 3km. Vehicles of police and forest departments escorted the elephants. A magnetic metal scanner attached to escort vehicles screened for nails and metals in the path of the jumbos.

A special diet and training to familiarise Jumbo Savari route will start on Sunday. A kitchen was set up to prepare nutritious food for the jumbos. Boiled rice cooked with jowar, green gram, black gram, wheat, vegetables and onion are given for Dasara jumbos. It will be topped with half kg of butter and served to each elephant before their stroll in the morning and after their stroll in the evening. After their stroll in the morning and before their stroll in the evening, they will be fed with Kusre-paddy, coconut, jaggery, groundnut cake and sugarcane packed with hay straw. During the day, the elephants consume green grass and branch fodder (leaves of Banyan tree) sticking to a menu prepared by the Forest Department. *—Salar News*

The nine Dasara elephants were taken from Mysuru Palace to the weighbridge at Dhanvantri Road for weight checking on Saturday *PHOTO: SALAR*

Muharram procession to hit traffic in City on Monday

BENGALURU, 24 AUG

In anticipation of the Muharram procession scheduled on Monday, City Traffic Police announced traffic diversions to ensure the smooth flow of vehicles.

The procession will commence from Johnson Market and conclude at Elgin Apartments on Hosur-Lashker Road between 11am and 5.30pm. As a result, motorists can expect traffic congestion and delays along the route.

Vehicles travelling from Brigade Road towards Hosur Road via Vellara Junction will be redirected. Instead, motorists are advised to take a left turn at the Old Police Station Junction, proceed via Wood Street and Tate Lane, join Richmond Road, and then continue towards Richmond Circle, Shanti Nagar Junction, and Nanjappa Circle. To rejoin Hosur Road, vehicles can use Longford Road and take a right turn at CMP Junction.

Traffic coming from Hosur Road towards Adugodi Junction should take a left turn near Anepalya Junction onto Cemetery Cross Road, then proceed via Berlie Street and Langford Road to reach Nanjappa Circle. From there, vehicles can either join Richmond Road or continue towards Shantinagar Junction.

Heavy goods vehicles (HGV) will be directed from Hosur Road towards Adugodi Junction. *—Salar News*

- The procession will commence from Johnson Market and conclude at Elgin Apartments on Hosur-Lashker Road

CBI files FIR against Sandip Ghosh over corruption case

CBI takes over the RG Kar College probe from SIT formed by WB

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

The CBI on Saturday registered a case of alleged financial irregularities at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College where a trainee doctor was found dead in a bloodied state on 9 August, officials said.

The agency took over the investigation from the Special Investigation Team (SIT) constituted by the West Bengal government on the directions of Calcutta High Court.

The court which had already handed over the probe into the rape and murder of the medico also transferred the probe of financial irregularities to the CBI. The High Court had given the directives for a CBI probe on the plea of former Deputy Superintendent of the hospital Akhtar Ali who had alleged financial irregularities in the hospital during the tenure of its former principal Sandip Ghosh.

Ali had already filed a complaint with the state police in July 2023.

He had given documentary evidence to corroborate the claims of massive corruption, improper utilization of government funds citing serious ramifications of such illegal activities upon public health and safety as well as misappropriation of public funds.

SFI and DYFI supporters protest against the alleged rape and murder of a resident doctor in Kolkata on Saturday **PHOTO: ANI**

CBI begins lie detection tests in murder case

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) began lie detection tests on former RG Kar Medical and Hospital principal Sandip Ghosh.

The polygraph test on arrested key accused Sanjay Roy was postponed due to technical issues and the central probe agency will determine a new date soon, they added.

"The polygraph tests are being conducted on Ghosh and five others, including interns, doctors, and an person connected to Roy. Technical glitches prevented civic volunteer Roy's test from being conducted as scheduled. We will soon decide when to carry out the test," an officer said.

A CBI source said the test on Roy may be held on Sunday at the Presidency Correctional Home, where he is currently lodged.

Due to the time-consuming nature of the polygraph tests and the limited availability of devices — only two are currently available — it may take a few more days for the CBI to complete testing all seven persons involved, the source added.

Meanwhile, Bengali actor Payel Mukherjee said she was allegedly heckled by a motor cyclist while driving her car on Friday night on a city road. A sobbing Payel in a video on Facebook said that a youth stopped his two-wheeler before her SUV on Southern Avenue and asked her to come out of the vehicle. The incident happened as the city witnesses spontaneous protests against the rape-murder at Kolkata hospital. *—PTI*

MVA, BJP protest against Badlapur rapes

NASHIK, 24 AUG

BJP workers on Saturday demonstrated in Thane against the MVA, accusing the Opposition to politicise the sexual assault on two schoolgirls in Badlapur in Thane district.

Meanwhile, Shiv Sena (UBT), Congress and NCP (SP) workers protested in Nashik under the Maha Vikas Aghadi's (MVA) against the incident. MVA had called for a 'bandh' on Saturday but it had to be withdrawn after Bombay High Court ruling.

Priyanka Damle, wife of a senior NCP politician, Ashish Damle was named in the FIR on Tuesday's violent protests over the incident. She is also associated with NCP. *—PTI*

> **It is a pity that instead of taking action against the culprits it is standing with them. Maharashtra has never seen a government as shameless as the incumbent dispensation**
>
> —Uddhav Thackeray, Shiv Sena (UBT) Chief

> **Badlapur incident has hit the image of Maharashtra. Such an incident has taken place in the land of Chhatrapati Shivaji, who used to chop off the hands of culprits involved in crimes against women**
>
> -Sharad Pawar, NCP (SP)

Maha Vikas Aghadi leaders and workers during a protest over the Badlapur sexual assault case, in Thane on Saturday **PHOTO: PTI**

No alliance with AAP in Haryana polls, says Congres

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

Kumari Selja **PHOTO: PTI**

Ruling out the possibility of an alliance with AAP for Haryana Assembly polls, senior Congress leader Kumari Selja has said her party is strong in the state and will fight the elections on its own.

In an interaction with PTI editors at the news agency's headquarters here, the Lok Sabha MP and the party's prominent Dalit face also dismissed the possibility of a hung Assembly, asserting that the Congress would secure an "excellent majority" in the 90-member House.

Selja also asserted that the Jannayak Janta Party (JJP) has lost a lot of ground in Haryana as it is "breaking up" and does not have a chance in the upcoming polls.

"The JJP has lost ground. This time you will not find many takers for the JJP. Even last time, most of the candidates who won were from the Congress. Today, it is already breaking up. Most of their MLAs have already left them. I don't see much of a chance for the JJP in this election," the AICC general secretary and former Haryana Congress chief said. She also dismissed the INLD-BSP alliance, pointing out that both parties had lost a lot of ground in the state.

"I don't think so (they will cut into our votes). Lok Dal's performance was abysmal in the Lok Sabha polls," Selja said.

"I do think that the Congress is strong on its own and we will fight on our own," she asserted. Exuding confidence of a big Congress win in the upcoming assembly polls, Selja said the people are "totally against" BJP. *—PTI*

Haryana BJP urges EC to defer Assembly poll citing long weekend

CHANDIGARH, 24 AUG

The Haryana unit of the ruling BJP has written to the Election Commission requesting a brief postponement of the Assembly polls slated for 1 October, citing holidays before and after the election date that could lead to lower voter turnout.

Haryana's Chief Electoral Officer Pankaj Agarwal confirmed that the commission has received a copy of the communication on Friday over e-mail. *—PTI*

Modi to visit M'rashtra, Rajasthan today

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Jalgaon in Maharashtra on Sunday to felicitate 11 lakh new 'Lakhpati Didis' who achieved the mark during the third term of his government. A statement on Saturday said Modi would also release a revolving fund of Rs 2,500 crore that would benefit about 48 lakh members of 4.3 lakh self-help groups (SHGs). Modi will also visit Rajasthan where he will be the chief guest at the concluding ceremony of the platinum jubilee celebrations of Rajasthan High Court, to be held on the High Court Campus, Jodhpur. *—PTI*

Ladakhis to march to Delhi, press for 4-point agenda

BHUBANESWAR, 24 AUG

The Leh Apex Body (LAB) on Saturday announced a foot march from Leh to Delhi in September to urge the Centre to resume the stalled dialogue with the leadership of Ladakh on their four-point agenda. The LAB and Kargil Democratic Alliance, both separate groupings of various political are jointly spearheading an agitation over the past four years in support of Statehood, extension of the Constitution's sixth schedule, early recruitment process along with a public service commission for Ladakh, and separate Lok Sabha seats for Leh and Kargil districts. *—PTI*

J&K Cong leader, retired SSP & others join BJP

JAMMU, 24 AUG

A Congress leader and a former police officer on Saturday joined the BJP along with dozens of their supporters here, vowing to work for the party's success in the Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir. J&K BJP President Ravinder Raina welcomed new entrants at two separate functions. He described the pre-poll alliance of Congress and National Conference as an outcome of BJP's popularity. Former Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Mohan Lal joined BJP, a day after his application for voluntary retirement from service was accepted. *—PTI*

Bulldozer justice not acceptable: Congress

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

Mallikarjun Kharge **PHOTO: PTI**

The Congress on Saturday said "repeated targeting" of minorities in BJP-ruled states is deeply troubling and asserted that 'bulldozer justice' is completely unacceptable and must stop.

The opposition party's assertion comes after the house of a man who allegedly indulged in violence in Madhya Pradesh's Chhatarpur district during a protest was demolished.

"The house of Shahzad Ali under Kotwali police station limits was demolished. We had registered a case against 150 people for the violence on Wednesday. We had named 46 people," an official had said.

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge said demolishing someone's home and rendering their family homeless is both inhumane and unjust.

"The repeated targeting of minorities in BJP-ruled states is deeply troubling. Such actions have no place in a society governed by the Rule of Law," he said in a post on X.

Congress strongly condemns BJP state governments for their blatant disregard of the Constitution, using bulldozing as a tactic to instil fear among citizens, Kharge said.

Kharge accused the Modi government of creating a "fake narrative" about jobs and claimed that in the upcoming assembly polls, BJP would be taught a lesson.

Kharge alleged that due to the anti-youth policies of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, there is a shortage of jobs in the country. *—PTI*

In manifesto, PDP vows J&K state restoration

SRINAGAR, 24 AUG

People's Democratic Party (PDP) on Saturday released its manifesto for the Assembly elections, promising to pursue the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir to its "original status", and advocate for confidence-building measures (CBMs) and regional cooperation between India and Pakistan.

The manifesto was released during a function at the party headquarters here by PDP president Mehbooba Mufti along with senior leaders of the party.

"The PDP is resolute in its pursuit of restoring the constitutional guarantees that were unjustly scrapped, and is committed to restoring Jammu & Kashmir to its original status, ensuring that the voices of its people are heard and their rights are safeguarded," it said.

The manifesto said the "unconstitutional and illegal revocation" of Articles 370 and 35A in 2019 has "further complicated the Kashmir issue, deepening the alienation felt by the people of the region".

It said the PDP firmly believes that meaningful engagement is the only way forward.

The party put thrust on improving relations between India and Pakistan, promising to advocate for diplomatic initiatives between the two neighbours, emphasising conflict resolution, CBMs, and regional cooperation.

The manifesto titled 'People's Aspirations' promised to establish full connectivity across the Line of Control (LoC) for trade and social exchange. *—PTI*

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) President Mehbooba Mufti with other party leaders in Srinagar on Saturday **PHOTO: PTI**

Will support Cong, NC if they endorse PDP agenda: Mufti

SRINAGAR, 24 AUG

People's Democratic Party (PDP) will extend complete support to the Congress-NC alliance and leave all seats in the Jammu and Kashmir assembly elections to the coalition if it is ready to accept the party's agenda, PDP Chief Mehbooba Mufti said on Saturday.

Mehbooba also ruled out an alliance with the BJP, with which PDP the had earlier run a coalition government.

"Forget about alliance and seat-sharing, if the Congress and the National Conference (NC) are ready to accept our agenda -- that resolution of the Kashmir issue is necessary and on opening of routes -- we will tell them to contest on all the seats and we will follow you," she said.

"Because, for me, the resolution of the Kashmir problem is much more important than anything else," she added when asked if the Congress had approached the PDP for an alliance.

Mehbooba was talking to reporters following the release of the PDP's manifesto for the assembly elections.

NC Chief Farooq Abdullah has announced a pre-poll alliance with the Congress for the assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir, which is going to the polls for the first time since the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019. *—PTI*

Spl booths, postal ballots for Kashmiri migrants

Jammu, 24 Aug

The Election Commission (EC) has set up 24 special polling stations in Jammu, Udhampur and New Delhi to facilitate voting by Kashmiri migrants in the upcoming Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections. Electors residing in zones and camps will be mapped to their respective polling stations in Jammu and Udhampur, the CEO added. *—PTI*

1 terrorist killed in J&K encounter

Baramulla, 24 Aug

One terrorist was killed in an encounter between the security forces and terrorists on Saturday. A search operation was launched following a brief exchange of fire with terrorists in Baramulla's Sopore area, police said. In the last few months, there has been a spike in terror attacks in the Jammu, including Doda and Udhampur. *—PTI*

BJP MLAS REMARK: AKHILESH BACKS MAYAWATI

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

Akhilesh Yadav **PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA**

Samajwadi Party Chief Akhilesh Yadav has said that a defamation case should be filed against BJP MLA Rajesh Chaudhary for his remarks against BSP Chief Mayawati.

In a video from a news channel shared by Yadav on X on Friday, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLA Chaudhary from Mathura district's Mant area is heard saying, "There is no doubt that Mayawati has been the chief minister of UP four times and it was us (BJP) who made her the chief minister for the first time. We made that mistake". "Mayawati is the most corrupt chief minister of Uttar Pradesh," Chaudhary had said. *—PTI*

DEMAND PENDING DUES

Telangana seeks financial aid, loan restructuring from Centre

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

Union Minister of Finance Nirmala Sitharaman with Telangana Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka in New Delhi on Saturday **PHOTO: ANI**

Telangana's Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka met Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman here on Saturday and sought financial assistance and pending dues in accordance with the state reorganisation Act.

He requested rescheduling of the non-budgetary loans taken by the previous government in the southern state and reduction in interest rates.

"I explained the state's financial situation to the Union minister and requested for assistance. I also reminded them about the release of funds for centrally-sponsored schemes and the funds that are due as per the reorganisation Act," Vikramarka said. "Currently, the interest payments on loans exceed the amount spent on salaries. I brought a total of eight such issues to the finance minister's attention," he added.

He also sought the release of the pending funds for the backward districts and requested for the Centre's intervention in obtaining dues from Andhra Pradesh for electricity. *—PTI*

OPPN NERVOUS OVER LADKI BAHIN SCHEME: SHINDE

YAVATMAL, 24 AUG

Maharashtra Chief Minister Ekanth Shinde on Saturday said the Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana has made the opposition nervous and women should strengthen the Mahayuti to see their monthly allowance in the scheme go up to Rs 4,000.

Shinde was speaking at a programme about the scheme in Yavatmal along with Deputy Chief Ministers Devendra Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar. The scheme was not launched to win votes but to ensure that women get the respect they deserve, he said.

He further claimed that if the Congress had been in power, people would have received only Rs 400 out of Rs 3,000 under the Ladki Bahin Scheme because of corruption. *—PTI*

Article 370 will never be restored, asserts Amit Shah

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

Amit Shah **PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA**

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday asserted that Article 370 of the Constitution, which gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir, will never be restored.

Shah's comments came as Jammu and Kashmir's two principal regional parties -- the National Conference and the PDP -- promised in their election manifestoes for upcoming assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir that they would work to restore the controversial provision, scrapped on 5 August, 2019.

"Article 370 has no place in Jammu and Kashmir now or ever. It will never be restored," Shah said. He was addressing a press conference here after attending a meeting of top civil and security officials of the Naxal-hit states.

India to be free of Naxal menace by 2026, says Shah

India will be free from Left Wing Extremism (LWE) by March 2026 and a strong and ruthless strategy is required for the final assault against the menace, Union Home Minister Amit Shah asserted on Saturday.

Urging Naxals to shun violence, Shah announced that the Chhattisgarh government would announce a "new look" surrender policy in 1-2 months. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

5-yr-old dies mysteriously in Delhi madarsa

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

A five-year-old boy died under mysterious circumstances at a madarsa in Brij Puri area of northeast Delhi, police said on Saturday. According to officials, preliminary investigation revealed a large number of eruptions and blisters on the boy's neck, abdomen, and groin. However, the exact cause of death will be determined after a post-mortem examination. The Delhi police said that they received a PCR call around 9.52 pm on Friday regarding the death of the child at the madarsa. The boy's mother said she had sent her son to the madarsa about five months ago. "On 23 August at 6.30 pm, she was informed that her son was sick. She took him to a private hospital in Brij Puri, where doctors declared him dead. She then brought the body back to the madarsa. *—ANI*

NRI shot by 2 men at home as family watches in Amritsar

AMRITSAR, 24 AUG

A non-resident Indian (NRI) was shot at by two unidentified assailants at his residence in Daburji village on the outskirts of the city here on Saturday, police said. Sukhchain Singh, who recently returned from the oning for a morning walk when the motorcycle-borne assailants intercepted him outside his residence. They took him inside his house and asked him for the registration documents of his luxury car, according to police. Following an altercation, the assailants manhandled Singh, fired three shots at him and fled the scene. Two of the bullets hit Singh in the head and near the chest. He was rushed to a private hospital, police said. The entire incident was captured on the CCTV camera installed in the victim's house. In the video, Singh's family members, including his children, are seen pleading with the assailants to let him go. *—PTI*

3 dead after getting trapped in machine at Gujarat factory

KUTCH, 24 AUG

Three people, including a 10-year-old boy, were killed in an accident at a China clay manufacturing factory near Bhuj in Gujarat's Kutch district on Saturday, police said. China clay is a key component in the ceramic industry. The accident occurred at Shri Hari Minerals located near Dhaneti village of Bhuj taluka around 11 am, an official from Paddhar police station said. Factory owner Govind Chamaria, 45, his son Akshar,10 and Chamaria's partner Prakash Vagani, 32, died after getting trapped in a China clay machine, the official said. The child fell into the machine, used to pulverise China clay, while playing. His father rushed to save him but he also got trapped in the machine. Prakash too got stuck in the machine, police said. —PTI

Mentally unwell man reunites with family after 10 yrs

LATUR, 24 AUG

A 34-year-old man who was missing for over a decade was reunited with his family in Yavatmal in Maharashtra last week, an official said on Saturday. The man, a tribal, was working as a caterer in Bengaluru and lost his mental balance, after which he began roaming around aimlessly, the official said. "A missing complaint was filed at Bengaluru police station at the time. After social worker Sandeep Shinde spotted him in Latur, he was shifted to Divya Seva Residential Rehabilitation Centre in Varvand in Buldhana where he was being treated for the last 10 years," said the centre's Ashok Kakade. "An elderly woman who came to centre recognised him and identified him as Arjun. *—PTI*

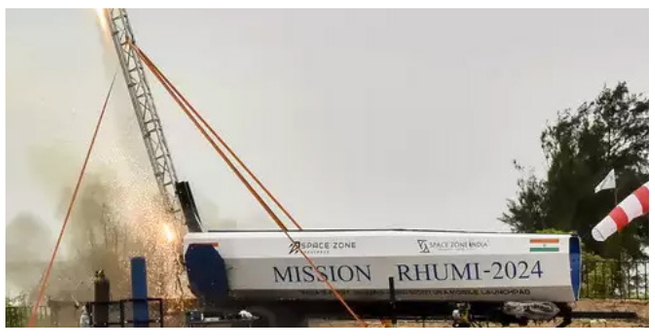
TN launches India's 1st reusable hybrid rocket

CHENNAI, 24 AUG

Tamil Nadu-based startup Space Zone India on Saturday launched its first reusable hybrid rocket, Mission RHUMI-2024, onboard a mobile platform to take up research on global warming and climate change.

City-headquartered Space Zone India has been conducting various projects under Mission RHUMI over the last two years.

The RHUMI rocket launched early in the day at Thiruvidanthai on the scenic East Coast Road near Chennai is powered by a generic-fuel-based hybrid motor and electrically triggered parachute deployer.



Launch of Mission Rhumi 2024, in Thiruvidanthai, Tamil Nadu, on Saturday **PHOTO: PTI**

"It is 3.5 metre tall rocket and was launched at about 7.25 am from the earlier 7am lift off schedule," Space Zone India Founder-CEO Anand Megalingam said.

Mission RHUMI has been claimed to be the world's first mobile launch of a hybrid rocket.

Anand Megalingam has said that RHUMI is named after his son Rhumithran.

The rocket launched today carried three CUBE satellites designed to monitor and collect data on atmospheric conditions, including cosmic radiation intensity, UV radiation, air quality, among others.

It also deployed 50 different Pico satellites to study various aspects of atmospheric conditions like accelerometer readings, altitude, ozone levels, to understand the environmental dynamics.

Dubbed as 'Moon Man of India', the project director of India's Moon Mission "Chandrayaan", Mylswamy Annadurai, is the mentor for Space Zone India.

"With this cutting edge technology, Space Zone India is poised to revolutionise how we approach rocket launches, making them more dynamic and responsive to the needs of the future," Annadurai said.

Diversified conglomerate Martin Group of Companies has backed Space Zone India on its latest Mission RHUMI 2024 through its Corporate Social Responsibility initiative.

"Supporting Space Zone India aligns perfectly with our vision. Their dedication to sustainability and excellence in aerospace technology is truly inspiring.

By supporting Mission RHUMI-2024, we are not only supporting a ground-breaking space mission but also enhancing the lives of future generations," he said on extending its support to Space Zone India. *—PTI*

Rajnath, Sullivan talk 'key' strategic matters

In US, Rajnath also met Defence Secy Austin

WASHINGTON, 24 AUG

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has met the US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan and shared perspectives on "key" strategic matters of mutual interest, a day after India and the US signed two key agreements to further boost their comprehensive global strategic partnership.

Singh arrived here on Thursday on a four-day official visit to further boost the comprehensive global strategic partnership between the US and India.

"Delighted to meet the National Security Advisor of the United States @jakesullivan and share perspectives on key strategic matters of mutual interest," Singh said in a post on X after his meeting on Friday.

He also had a "fruitful" exchange with leading US defence companies and invited them to work with Indian partners to accelerate the Make in India programme.

It said that Singh "echoed building on the defence cooperation and elevating the strategic partnership through deeper defence engagements at multiple levels".

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh meets the US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, in Washington, on Saturday **PHOTO: PTI**

Earlier in the day, he met US Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin to review and further deepen the existing defence cooperation activities between the two countries.

The signing of Security of Supply Arrangements and the agreement for positioning of Indian officers at key US commands are pathbreaking developments, he added.

The agreements signed on Thursday pertain to the Security of Supplies Arrangement (SOSA) and a Memorandum of Agreement regarding the Assignment of Liaison Officers. *—PTI*

'IGNORED WARNING SIGNS'

Wayanad tragedy caused by human greed: Kerala HC

KOCHI, 24 AUG

The landslides that hit Wayanad district in Kerala claiming over 200 lives was just another instance of nature reacting to human "apathy and greed", the High Court here has said.

The court said that the "warning signs" had appeared a long time ago but "we chose to ignore them in pursuit of a development agenda that would supposedly put our state on the high road to economic prosperity".

It said that the natural disasters in 2018 and 2019, the pandemic that persisted for nearly two years and the recent landslides "have shown us the error of our ways".

"If we do not mend our ways and take affirmative remedial action now, perhaps it will be too late," a bench of justices AK Jayasankaran Nambiar and Syam Kumar VM said .

PHOTO: PTi

The court suo motu initiated the PIL "to persuade the state government to introspect on its currently held notions for sustainable development in the state of Kerala and revisit its policy regarding the same", the bench said in its order of 23 August.

The bench has also directed the Centre and Kerala government to file affidavits clarifying whether in the wake of the natural disasters that have occurred in the state, they propose to increase the number of subject experts as mandated under the Disaster Management Act (DMA) 2005. *—PTI*

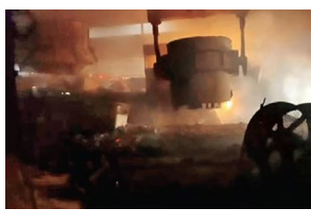


PHOTO: PTI

22 INJURED IN MAHARASHTRA BOILER EXPLOSION

JALNA, 24 AUG

As many as 22 workers were injured in a boiler explosion at a steel factory in MIDC area in Jalna city of Maharashtra on Saturday, police said.

The condition of three workers is critical, said Superintendent of Police Ajay Kumar Bansal.

The explosion at Gaj Kesari Steel Mill, which occurred around noon, resulted in molten iron falling on workers, he said.

Three workers were admitted to a private hospital in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar city in critical condition.

Another official said that the factory manufactures steel bars from scrap, adding that police are recording statements of injured workers. He said that legal action is being taken against the company owner. *—PTI*

26 dead, 1.28L hit in Tripura floods

People carry their belongings from flood affected areas as they arrive by boat from Diara area, in Patna, Saturday **PHOTO: PTI**

AGARTALA, 24 AUG

Two people have been killed during rescue operations in flood-hit Tripura, officials said on Saturday.

Tripura State Rifles (TSR) jawan Asish Bose was washed away in a river during a rescue operation in South Tripura's Belonia while jeep driver Chiranjit Deb drowned while rescuing three persons in Indranagar in West Tripura district on Friday.

With the fresh fatalities, the toll in the state due to the floods rose to 26, while 1.28 lakh people have been rendered homeless in the worst deluge in the northeastern state in the last three decades.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi condoled the deaths during rescue operations.

"Extremely pained to learn about the tragic loss of two brave jawans during the rescue operation in flood-hit Tripura. Their selfless service, courage and sacrifice will always be remembered. My deepest condolences to their bereaved families. The nation stands with them in this difficult time," Gandhi wrote on X.

Chief Minister Manik Saha also expressed deep sorrow over the deaths of two persons. *—PTI*

No rain relief to M'rashtra, Gujarat; cities flooded

MUMBAI, 24 AUG

Mumbai and its neighbouring Thane and Palghar districts and many other parts of Maharashtra are expected to receive heavy rainfall over the next four to five days, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has said.

The Met office on Friday issued an orange alert forecasting heavy to very heavy rainfall in Palghar, Thane, Mumbai, Raigad and Ratnagiri districts of Konkan from 24 August onwards.

The IMD has also issued an orange alert for the Pune and Satara districts of western Maharashtra and Amravati, Bhandara, Chandrapur and Gondia districts of Vidarbha.

Gujarat

Heavy rains lashed parts of north Gujarat on Saturday, inundating low-lying areas and blocking state highways and roads connecting villages.

According to officials, water levels have reached above the danger mark in 66 out of 206 reservoirs in the state.

Six state highways and 36 panchayat roads were flooded, the government said.

Seven villagers were rescued in Dahod and Chhota Udepur districts after they were stranded as water levels of rivers rose amid rains. *—PTI*

Hyderabad-bound helicopter crashes in Pune amid heavy rain

Pune, 24 Aug

A helicopter flying from Mumbai to Hyderabad crashed in Pune's Mulshi tehsil on Saturday afternoon, police said.All four occupants survived the crash that took place near Paud, though they may have suffered injuries, an official said."The captain of the helicopter is being taken to hospital, while the other three are stable.
The helicopter belongs to Global Vectra company. The cause of the crash is yet to be ascertained," he said.

—PTI

'VIOLATION OF LAW'

Nagarjuna's Convention hall demolished in Hyderabad

The N Convention, jointly owned by actor Nagarjuna, being demolished by the Hyderabad Disaster Response in Hyderabad, on Saturday **PHOTO: PTI**

HYDERABAD, 24 AUG

The government authorities on Saturday demolished the N-Convention centre in Madhapur here, which is jointly owned by Telugu superstar Nagarjuna, for allegedly being constructed on encroached land on the Full Tank Level of the Tummidikunta lake.

Actor Nagarjuna said they had "not done any actions in violation of law" and the demolition was clearly carried out "wrongfully based on misinformation".

The property was demolished by Hyderabad Disaster Response and Assets Monitoring and Protection agency. N-Convention is managed by N3 Enterprises.

"I thought it fit to issue this statement to place on record certain facts for protecting my reputation and to indicate that we have not done any actions in violation of law. The land is a Patta land, and not even an inch of tank plan is encroached," he said. *—PTI*

AMID HEMA REPORT ROW

Bengali actress Mitra accuses director Ranjith of 'misconduct'

T'PURAM/KOLKATA, 24 AUG

A Bengali actor has levelled accusation of misbehaviour against eminent Malayalam film director and chairman of the state-run Kerala Chalachitra Academy, Ranjith, spelling fresh trouble for the Pinarayi Vijayan government which is facing opposition heat on its alleged inaction over the Justice Hema Committee report.

The report had revealed instances of harassment and exploitation of women in the Malayalam cinema industry, prompting calls for action against the guilty.

Ranjith **PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA**

The filmmaker has reportedly rejected Mitra's charge and said he was the "real victim" in the case.

Youth Cong lodges formal complaint against Ranjith

The Congress party's youth wing lodged a formal complaint with the police against him. Abin Varkey, the state president of the Youth Congress, also lodged a formal complaint.

Thereafter, during the day, Youth Congress activists holding flags of their organisation protested outside a resort in Meppadi in Wayanad district where Ranjith was staying.

Youth Congress activists also held a protest march to the official residence of the state Culture Minister Saji Cherian, demanding his resignation. *—PTI*

Sufi leaders meet Rijiju, seek better facilities

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

A delegation of Sufi leaders from across India met Union Minorities Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju on Saturday in New Delhi, to discuss the development of the Sufi Corridor and other initiatives aimed at promoting spiritual and social progress.

The Sufi Corridor seeks to establish world-class infrastructure and develop modern facilities, including accommodation, transportation, and amenities around leading Sufi shrines in India, beginning with Ajmer Sharif. This initiative aims to position India as a global spiritual destination for those seeking the teachings of Sufism. The Sufi Corridor project envisions, catering to the needs of pilgrims and tourists visiting Sufi shrines.

PHOTO: SALAR

The meeting also focused on the holistic development of Muslims in India, including initiatives in education, healthcare, and skill development. The delegation expressed support for the new Waqf Amendments while raising certain concerns. *—Salar News*

Bodies of Indians killed in Nepal sent to autopsy

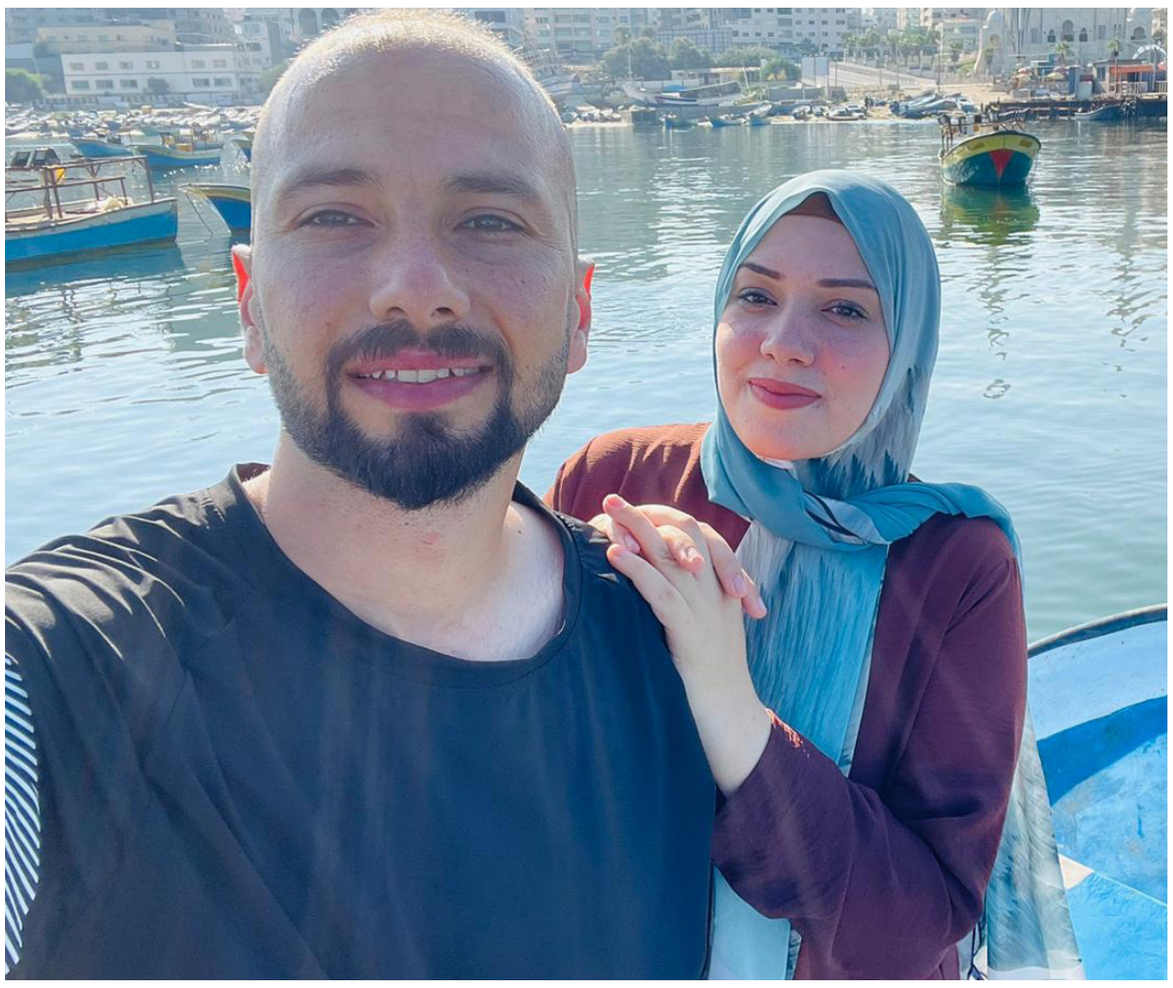
KATHMANDU, 24 AUG

The post-mortem of the 27 Indian pilgrims who were killed in the tragic bus accident in Nepal was underway in a hospital in the Bagmati province on Saturday, a senior official said, ahead of the transportation of the bodies to Maharashtra.

At least 27 Indian pilgrims, all from Maharashtra, who were in Nepal for a 10-day tour, were killed and 16 others injured after their bus veered off the highway and fell into a fast-flowing river.

Meanwhile, Union Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports Raksha Nikhil Khadse arrived to oversee the return of the victims. *—PTI*

A FIRST PERSON ACCOUNT DIRECTLY FROM GAZA



Bilal and his Noor Ali Abu Nadaa lived in Gaza with their three children. Tragically, Bilal was killed in a bombing while he was trying to rescue their neighbours; Families with children live in tents near a bombed-out schools in Gaza ***PHOTOS: SALAR/UNICEF***

FROM DESPAIR TO HOPE: A WOMAN'S FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL AMID GAZA'S DEVASTATION

Reha Fathima

SALAR EXCLUSIVE

"Sometimes I wish someone would call 'cut!' and tell me this is just a film. But it's not. It's our reality," said Noor Ali Abu Nadaa, a 31-year-old Palestinian teacher, mother of three and a war widow. She told Salar News about her story of devastation, resilience and hope in Gaza.

On 7 October, 2023, Noor's world was forever altered as Israel began its assault against Gaza. Like for many in Gaza, the initial days were of fear and hope. As the war progressed, what was thought as a mere trial became a nightmarish reality, which resulted in the loss of her husband, Bilal.

On 17 December, 2023, Noor's life took a devastating turn. Bilal, who had stepped out to aid in the rescue of neighbours who had been bombed, was killed in an attack. As the news of Bilal's death arrived, Noor — who had fled with her children and father-in-law to escape the bombing — was left alone to navigate the brutality of war.

"Bilal was my rock. He always reassured me, even in chaos. I remember his final words: 'Do not be afraid. Nothing will happen to us except what God has decreed.' It was his way of comforting me, even as the world crumbled around us. But then, in an instant, he was gone," she said. Bilal and Noor's love story began at Al-Aqsa University where they were classmates. Their relationship blossomed into enduring love, which culminated into marriage. The two Gazans built a family of five with their three boys: Hossam, Yousef, and Ali.

"Bilal and I built a life full of love," Noor mused. "Now, I'm left with the memories of what we had and the harsh reality of what remains. The war has changed everything."

Noor's story is not unique. There are countless people like Noor, each with their own story of loss and survival. The widows who mourn their spouses, the parents who bury their children, the children who will grow up without knowing the love of a parent — all lives mangled by the war unleashed by Israel.

Noor shares her story of grief and resilience on social media to show the world the tragedy unfolding in Gaza. "I initially hesitated to share our suffering. After Bilal died, I had to find a way to cope. Writing became my outlet, a way of showing the world our suffering." As the world grows indifferent to the suffering in Gaza, and as journalists become targets themselves, Noor feels that the people of Gaza have been left feeling like spectators to their suffering, with the world watching but failing to act. "The world's attention has moved on. It feels like we are forgotten, left to suffer in silence while the world looks away," she added.

Life before vs now

Noor had a happy childhood in Gaza with her parents and 10 siblings — six sisters and four brothers. Though her education was often disrupted by conflict, she pursued a degree in Physical Education, getting a job as a PE teacher in a local school, which was destroyed by bombing.

According to reports, 90 per cent of Gaza schools are damaged ***PHOTO: PTI***

> **The days are almost unbearable. We wake up to a harsh reality — tents, open fires, and a constant battle for clean water. It feels like a dystopian nightmare. My greatest fear is for my children's future. What kind of world are we leaving for them?**

> "Bilal and I built a life full of love," Noor mused. "Now, I'm left with the memories of what we had and the harsh reality of what remains. The war has changed everything."

> **I've always taught about human rights. But now, I see how hollow those ideals are when faced with the stark reality of our suffering. It's hard to teach my children about justice and rights when the world around us seems to ignore these principles**

Before Israel's assault on Gaza, Noor's neighbourhood was a safe haven. It had stood untouched by the earlier waves of destructions. But this time, no corner was spared. Houses, mosques, schools, and even trees were consumed by the indiscriminate bombings.

"The destruction is beyond words. Our once safe spaces are now just memories. We watch in disbelief as everything we knew was wiped away," she said.

"As a teacher, I strived to inspire my students," Noor said. However, now she is not even sure how many of her students have died in the war. The education system, already fragile, faces disruptions due to the increased bombing. Her biggest concern is for her eight-year-old son, Hossam, who is yet to experience schooling.

According to reports, 90 per cent of Gaza schools are damaged. At least 133 schools in Gaza now shelter over 1.9 million displaced people, far exceeding their capacity. Higher education centres, including universities, are paralysed. Many Palestinians were killed in Israeli attacks on UN-run schools sheltering displaced individuals.

"My greatest fear is for my children's future. What kind of world are we leaving for them? How will they ever recover from this?" she questioned. The impact on children has been profound. Psychological scars such as nail-biting, bed-wetting, and night terrors are just the beginning. Many children are now homeless, orphaned, and in desperate need of medical care.

Noor's three-year-old niece, Iman, fell victim to shrapnel during a bombing adding to Noor's grief. "Iman was our ray of sunshine. Losing her was a crushing blow. We fled with her body in our arms, only to arrive at the hospital too late. Man's cruelty snuffed out her joy," she said.

'Unbearable days'

Nights, once dreaded for their bombings, have given way to days filled with new horrors - lack of food being one of them. Food supplies are scarce with people living on legumes and canned food for months. The blockade has driven up prices dramatically. A packet of diapers costs $100 (Rs 83,000). Extreme weather and the absence of electricity have also exacerbated the Gazans' suffering.

"The days are almost unbearable. We wake up to a harsh reality — tents, open fires, and a constant battle for clean water. It feels like a dystopian nightmare," she added.

Families with children are living on the streets or in bombed-out schools, sleeping on rubble and dirt. Everything is a struggle - food, water, and finding a bathroom as Israel's military ordered multiple evacuations even in the safe zones. Recently, Israel forced 4,00,000 people to leave Southeast Gaza. "I've always taught about human rights. But now, I see how hollow those ideals are when faced with the stark reality of our suffering. It's hard to teach my children about justice and rights when the world around us seems to ignore these principles," she said.

Constant evacuations

After her husband's death, Noor's brothers took her to Rafah, where she moved four times. When Rafah was invaded on 8 May, 2024, they went to the centre of the sector Maghazi Governorate.

"I am now in my father's relatives' house, partially bombed but repaired. We live here, unsure if we will stay or move again, or perhaps die. Displacement feels like death walking on two legs. I wake my children, grab what I can, and run with no destination. We run, then decide where to hide next," she said.

Israel has killed more than 39,000 Palestinians. The list of those identified is 532 pages long, with over 9,300 names belonging to children. Amid all this suffering, Noor's story is a testament to the human spirit's resilience. "Despite everything, I hold on to hope. Hope that one day, this war will end and my children will know a world of peace," she added.

—Salar News

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

World-first lung cancer vaccine trials launched across 7 nations

Doctors have begun trialling the world's first mRNA lung cancer vaccine in patients, as experts hailed its "groundbreaking" potential to save thousands of lives.

Lung cancer is the world's leading cause of cancer death, accounting for about 1.8m deaths every year. Survival rates in those with advanced forms of the disease, where tumours have spread, are particularly poor.

Now experts are testing a new jab that instructs the body to hunt down and kill cancer cells – then prevents them ever coming back. Known as BNT116 and made by BioNTech, the vaccine is designed to treat non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC), the most common form of the disease.

The phase 1 clinical trial, the first human study of BNT116, has launched across 34 research sites in seven countries: the UK, US, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Spain and Turkey.

The UK has six sites, located in England and Wales, with the first UK patient to receive the vaccine having their initial dose on Tuesday.

Overall, about 130 patients – from early-stage before surgery or radiotherapy, to late-stage disease or recurrent cancer – will be enrolled to have the jab alongside immunotherapy. About 20 will be from the UK.

The jab uses messenger RNA (mRNA), similar to Covid-19 vaccines, and works by presenting the immune system with tumour markers from NSCLC to prime the body to fight cancer cells expressing these markers.

The aim is to strengthen a person's immune response to cancer while leaving healthy cells untouched, unlike chemotherapy.

"We are now entering this very exciting new era of mRNA-based immunotherapy clinical trials to investigate the treatment of lung cancer," said Prof Siow Ming Lee, a consultant medical oncologist at University College London hospitals NHS foundation trust (UCLH), which is leading the trial in the UK.

"It's simple to deliver, and you can select specific antigens in the cancer cell, and then you target them. This technology is the next big phase of cancer treatment."

Lung cancer is the world's leading cause of cancer death, accounting for about 1.8m deaths every year. Survival rates in those with advanced forms of the disease are particularly poor ***PHOTO: PTI***

Janusz Racz, 67, from London, was the first person to have the vaccine in the UK. He was diagnosed in May and soon after started chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

The scientist, who specialises in AI, said his profession inspired him to take part in the trial. "I am a scientist too, and I understand that the progress of science – especially in medicine – lies in people agreeing to be involved in such investigations," he said.

He added: "It would be very beneficial for me, because it's a new methodology not available for other patients that can help me to get rid of the cancer.

"And also, I can be a part of the team that can provide proof of concept for this new methodology, and the faster it would be implemented across the world, more people will be saved."

Racz received six consecutive injections five minutes apart over 30 minutes at the National Institute for Health Research UCLH Clinical Research Facility on Tuesday.

Each jab contained different RNA strands. He will get the vaccine every week for six consecutive weeks, and then every three weeks for 54 weeks.

Lee said: "We hope adding this additional treatment will stop the cancer coming back because a lot of time for lung cancer patients, even after surgery and radiation, it does come back."

He added: "I've been in lung cancer research for 40 years now. When I started in the 1990s, nobody believed chemotherapy worked.

"We now know about 20-30% [of patients] stay alive with stage 4 with immunotherapy and now we want to improve survival rates. So hopefully this mRNA vaccine, on top of immunotherapy, might provide the extra boost.

"We hope to go on to phase 2, phase 3, and then hope it becomes standard of care worldwide and saves lots of lung cancer patients."

The Guardian revealed in May that thousands of patients in England were to be fast-tracked into groundbreaking trials of cancer vaccines in a revolutionary world-first NHS "matchmaking" scheme to save lives.

Under the scheme, patients who meet the eligibility criteria will gain access to clinical trials for the vaccines that experts say represent a new dawn in cancer treatment.

Lord Vallance, the science minister, hailed the launch of the lung cancer vaccine trial. "This approach has the potential to save the lives of thousands diagnosed with lung cancer every year," he said. "We back our researchers so that they continue to be an integral part of projects that produce groundbreaking therapies, like this one."

Racz hopes once his treatment is over he can get back to running and achieve his lifetime ambition: completing the London Marathon.

—Courtesy, The Guardian

Hindus, Muslims protected Dhaka's temple: Priest

Devotees wait to offer prayers at the Dhakeshwari National Temple at Old Dhaka area, in Dhaka, on Friday **PHOTO: PTI**

DHAKA, 24 AUG

Describing the deity of the ancient Dhakeswari Temple here as a "mother to all humans", a priest of the revered shrine said several Hindus, Muslims and others from the local community had come together to guard it soon after the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government in Bangladesh.

The centuries-old temple in old Dhaka has many mosques in its vicinity and chimes of temple bells at times merge with the sound of 'azaan' emerging from nearby mosques.

PTI on Friday visited the Sree Sree Dhakeswari National Temple, one of the prominent 'shakti peethas', and interacted with priests and members of the Hindu community who visited the shrine.

While a young married couple had come to seek blessings for their two-month-old daughter, a woman lit candles at a corner of the temple courtyard facing the sanctum sanctorum and diligently prayed. "People of many religions come here to pray. And, Maa (Goddess) is mother to all humans whether it is Hindus, Muslims, Christians or Buddhists. They come here to seek solace, prosperity and mental peace," Ashim Maitro, one of the main priests, told PTI.

After serving the temple for 15 years, he looks at the shrine of 'Maa Dhakeswari' as a symbol of religious and communal harmony. The 53-year-old priest, some of whose family members also live in West Bengal, says the evening aarti of this temple is performed at 7 pm, nearly 30 minutes after the Maghrib prayer at mosques nearby. When Prime Minister Hasina left the country, "no visitor was here", he said, adding there was "no police force" either at that time as everything was in disarray amid political chaos. Maitro said on 5 August, they continued to perform regular puja "without any break" and since then 'bhog' has also been offered every day as per the timings of the rituals.

Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, people from all communities come here, and "there is no restriction" but people have to follow timings, he added. People from outside Dhaka in Bangladesh and even from India come to visit this ancient temple. Nearly, every day, people from the Indian community in Bangladesh visit the temple, Maitro said.

—PTI

PHOTO: X

Pak to experiment with new currency notes

KARACHI, 24 AUG

Pakistan's central bank will experiment with a new polymer plastic currency banknote later this year while redesigning all the existing banknotes for enhanced security and hologram features. State Bank of Pakistan Governor Jameel Ahmed told a Senate committee on banking and finance in Islamabad that all the existing paper currency notes are being redesigned with new security features by December this year. Ahmed said the newly redesigned banknotes in the denominations of Rs 10, 50, 100, 500, 1000 and 5000 would be issued in December. "The old notes would remain in circulation for five years being eased out of the market by the central bank," a source close to the committee said. Presently around 40 countries use polymer plastic banknotes which are hard to counterfeit and have more enhanced security features like hologram and see-through-window. *—PTI*

3 killed in knife attack in Germany

SOLINGEN, 24 AUG

Three people were killed and at least eight people wounded, in a knife attack at a festival in the western German city of Solingen. "The police are currently conducting a large-scale search for the perpetrator," police said in a statement. They have assembled a large number of forces around Solingen city centre, including special units. "Both victims and witnesses are currently being questioned," they said. Witnesses alerted police shortly after 9.30pm on Friday to an unknown attacker having wounded several people with a knife on a central square, the Fronhof police said that the perpetrator was on the run, and that they so far had only very thin information on the assailant. *—AP*

China endangered fisheries plane: Philippines

MANILA, 24 AUG

A Philippine fisheries bureau plane was threatened by flares fired from a Chinese island base while conducting a routine patrol in the South China Sea, Philippine officials said on Saturday. It's the latest territorial spat between Beijing and Manila over one of the world's busiest trade routes, with confrontations spreading from the disputed waters to the airspace above. The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources' Cessna 208B Grand Caravan plane was flying near Subi Reef on Thursday when it spotted flares being fired from the fishing atoll, which has been transformed by China into a militarised island base, a Philippine government interagency task force said in a statement. No other details were provided, including the distance of the flares from the Philippine plane. *—AP*

Justin Bieber, Hailey Bieber welcome first child

LOS ANGELES, 24 AUG

Celebrity couple Justin Bieber and Hailey Bieber announced the birth of their son on Saturday. Justin, 30, shared a post on his Instagram handle to welcome son, Jack Blues Bieber. The post featured Hailey's hand and the toe of the newborn. It was captioned, "WELCOME HOME JACK BLUES BIEBER," accompanied with a bear emoji. Hailey, 27, re-shared the post on her Instagram story and wrote, "Jack Blues" adding a bear and a blue heart emoji. Justin is known for songs like "Baby", "Love Me", "Sorry", "Yummy" and "Peaches", whereas, Hailey is a model and socialite. They tied the knot in 2018. *—PTI*

ISOLATIONIST POLICY NOT HEALTHY, SAYS NIKKI

Nikki urges support for US allies, while supporting Trump

TAIPEI, 24 AUG

Former US ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley, put in good words for Republican nominee Donald Trump on Saturday during her visit to Taiwan, saying that an isolationist policy isn't "healthy" and called on her party to stand with her country's allies.

Haley, who ran against Trump for the party's presidential nomination, told reporters in the capital, Taipei, that supporting US allies, including Ukraine and Israel, was vital while underscoring the importance of Taiwan — which Beijing claims as its territory to be brought under control by force if necessary. "I don't think the isolationist approach is healthy. I think America can never sit in a bubble

Haley also criticised US Vice President Kamala Harris, saying she would "do exactly" what President Joe Biden had done. She said Harris was part of his administration when the Taliban took over Afghanistan in 2021, when Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022. *—AP*

Nikki Haley, former United States Ambassador to the United Nations, delivers a speech during the Ketagalan Forum in Taipei, Taiwan **PHOTO:PTI**

Iranian group tried to target WhatsApps of Trump, Biden officials'

The same Iranian hacking group believed to have targeted both the Democratic and Republican presidential campaigns, tried to go after the WhatsApp accounts of staffers in the administrations of President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump, Meta Platforms said on Friday. Meta said that it discovered the network of hackers who received the suspicious WhatsApp messages reported them. *—AP*

Robert F Kennedy Jr suspends campaign, backs Donald Trump

PHOENIX, 24 AUG

Robert F Kennedy Jr suspended his independent campaign for president on Friday and endorsed Donald Trump, a late-stage shakeup of the presidential race that could give the former president a modest boost from Kennedy's supporters.

Kennedy said his internal polls had shown that his presence in the race would hurt Trump and help Democratic nominee Kamala Harris, though recent public polls don't provide a clear indication that he is having an outsize impact on support for either major-party candidate.

Kennedy cited free speech, the war in Ukraine and "a war on our children" as among the reasons he would try to remove his name from the ballot in battleground states. *—AP*

Evacuation order pushes Palestinians to refugee camps

DEIR AL-BALAH, 24 AUG

Young girls screamed and elbowed each other in a crush of bodies in southern Gaza, trying desperately to reach the front of the food line. Men doled out rice and chicken as fast as they could, platefuls of the nourishment falling to the ground in the tumult.

Nearby, boys waited to fill plastic containers with water, standing for hours among tents packed so tightly they nearly touched. Hunger and desperation were palpable Friday in the tent camp along the Deir al-Balah beachfront, after a month of successive evacuation orders that have pressed thousands of Palestinians into the area that the Israeli military calls a "humanitarian zone." The zone has long been crowded by Palestinians seeking refuge from bombardment, but the situation grows more dire by the day, as waves of evacuees arrive and food and water grow scarce. Over the last month, the Israeli military has issued evacuation orders for southern Gaza at an unprecedented pace. "The food that reaches us from the charity is sufficient for the people in our camp," said Muhammad Al-Qayed, who was displaced from Gaza City and now lives along the beach. "Where do the people who were recently displaced get food from? From where do we provide them?"

Another displaced Palestinian, Adham Hijazi, said: "I have started thinking that if there is no food, I will go and drink seawater to endure it. I am talking seriously. I will drink water and salt." *—AP*

UN and US say food is on its way to Sudan

CAIRO, 24 AUG

Food aid is on the way to an area of Sudan facing famine amid the northeast African country's grinding conflict, a group of countries and the United Nations said in a joint statement Friday.

The statement came at the conclusion of more than a week of talks in Geneva, Switzerland, aimed at calming the conflict, but that failed to bring together the two warring sides. The talks were convened as the country's humanitarian crisis worsens.

Last month, global experts said that starvation at a massive camp for displaced people in the Sudanese region of Darfur had grown into famine. And about 25.6 million people — more than half of Sudan's population — will face acute hunger, experts from the Famine Review Committee warned. Aid trucks were rolling Friday to "provide famine relief in Zamzam Camp and other parts of Darfur," said a joint statement. *—AP*

TALIBAN BANS AFGHAN WOMEN'S VOICES IN PUBLIC

KABUL, 24 AUG

Life as a woman in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan just got even more restrictive as a government ministry enacts new laws on "vice and virtue" in the country, banning women's voices and uncovered faces from public life.

The laws were issued Wednesday by the ministry for the "propagation of virtue and the prevention of vice," which was established in 2021 after the Taliban seized control. That was the year the US military and other western powers, including Canada, evacuated the country, leaving behind a power vacuum quickly filled by the militant group. Many Afghans who worked for western powers, including drivers and interpreters, were left behind in the chaotic departure. "Inshallah we assure you that this Islamic law will be of great help in the promotion of virtue and the elimination of vice," ministry said.

—Courtesy, Global News

UN RAISES ALARM

1,000s of Rohingyas feared trapped in Myanmar fighting

BANGKOK, 24 AUG

The UN's human rights chief joined a chorus of concern Friday for members of Myanmar's Muslim Rohingya ethnic minority after many were reported killed in recent fighting between the military government and the Arakan Army, an armed ethnic rebel group.

According to a statement from the Geneva office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk, he "expressed grave alarm and raised profound concerns about the sharply deteriorating situation across Myanmar, particularly in Rakhine State where hundreds of civilians have reportedly been killed while trying to flee the fighting."

It said his agency had documented that "both the military and the Arakan Army, which now controls most of the townships in Rakhine, have committed serious human rights violations and abuses against the Rohingya, including extrajudicial killings, some involving beheadings, abductions, forced recruitment, indiscriminate bombardments of towns and villages using drones and artillery, and arson attacks."

The statement cited an 5 August attack along the Naf River bordering Bangladesh, when "dozens were reportedly killed, including by armed drones," but said it was unclear who was responsible.

The group, which is the military wing of the state's Buddhist Rakhine ethnic group, denied responsibility for the attack on Rohingya fleeing the fighting in the town of Maungdaw, which the Arakan Army has been trying to seize from the army. However, more accounts have since surfaced placing the blame on the group. *—AP*

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy attends a ceremony on Saturday **PHOTO: X/@ZELENSKYYUA**

Ukraine marks 33rd Independence anniversary

KYIV, 24 AUG

A somber atmosphere pervades Ukraine's 33rd Independence Day Saturday, as the nation's war against Russia's aggression reaches a 30-month milestone. No fireworks, parades or concerts are planned and instead Ukrainians will mark the day with commemorations for civilians and soldiers killed in the war.

Ukrainians have flooded social media with messages of gratitude and support, greeting each other and thanking the soldiers on the front lines. In the outpouring of unity, there's a shared acknowledgment that the two-and-a-half years have been tough, with fatigue increasingly setting in.

"Independence is the silence we experience when we lose our people," President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said to the nation. He pointed out that the war started by Russia has now spread to its own territory.

Russia and Ukraine exchanged over 100 prisoners of war on Saturday as Kyiv marked its third Independence Day since Moscow's full-scale invasion. Ukraine said the 115 servicemen who were freed were conscripts, many of whom were taken prisoner in the first months of Russia's invasion. Among them are nearly 50 soldiers captured by Russian forces from the Azovstal steelworks in Mariupol. *—AP*

11 killed, 14 missing after heavy rain batters China

1,88,757 people in China have been affected **PHOTO: X/@AA_MACEDONIAN**

BEIJING, 24 AUG

Torrential rains have left at least 11 people dead and 14 others missing in the city of Huludao, northeast China's Liaoning province which left a trail of destruction causing heavy damage to the roads and bridges amounting to USD 1.44 billion, official media reported on Saturday.

The latest round of heavy rainfall caused severe damage in Huludao, particularly in the city's Jianchang County and Suizhong County, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

Roads, power lines, communication networks, houses and crops were badly affected. Currently, roads and communication networks are gradually being restored in affected areas and efforts are being made to search for the missing people.

According to preliminary figures, 1,88,757 people in Huludao have been affected, with losses amounting to USD 1.44 billion.

China has allocated USD 28 million from the country's central budget to aid disaster relief and restoration work in the flood-hit areas. *—AP*

1ST SPACEX SPACEWALK

Polaris Dawn mission opens a new chapter

ALABAMA, 24 AUG

SpaceX's upcoming Polaris Dawn mission aims to be historic in more ways than one. Polaris Dawn plans to not only orbit Earth higher than any astronauts have in more than 50 years but to also feature the first private spacewalk.

It's expected to launch 27 August, 2024, and feature a crew of four: the mission's commander, Jared Isaacman; Scott Poteet, a 20-year Air Force veteran pilot; and SpaceX employees Anna Menon and Sarah Gillis. Launching on a Falcon 9 rocket, they will travel in a SpaceX Dragon capsule named Resilience.

As a space policy expert, I see this mission as a major step in the development of commercial spaceflight. If successful, this mission will show that private companies are working on developing the capabilities needed to go to the Moon or Mars.

The mission is expected to launch 27 August, 2024 **PHOTO: POLARIS**

Commercial spaceflight

Polaris Dawn's time in space will be spent testing communications between it and Earth via Starlink satellites and completing almost 40 experiments. Many of these experiments will study how the human body reacts in low-gravity environments and measure the radiation the capsule receives. In addition to providing launch services to NASA, SpaceX also sells flights on its Falcon 9 rocket and Dragon crew capsule to individuals and companies.

SpaceX's first commercial mission, Inspiration4, launched in 2021. It was led by Isaacman, Polaris Dawn's commander.

High-flying orbit

Given SpaceX's ambitions to conduct its own missions to the Moon and Mars, it will need to develop and test the many elements that such missions will require. It will need to design and test EVA suits, complete longer missions that mimic the time needed to get to places such as the Moon and demonstrate an ability to communicate with Earth.

At its peak, Polaris Dawn plans to reach an orbit of more than 1367 kilometres from Earth. That's more than twice the distance between Earth and the International Space Station, which orbits about 408 km up.

Testing new suits

Perhaps more importantly, the spacewalk will test out SpaceX's new EVA suits. Developing these suits is perhaps one of the most difficult tasks to accomplish.

NASA learned early on that spacesuits are incredibly tricky. They must provide life support and protection from the space environment while allowing astronauts to move about. This is particularly tricky, as fully pressurised suits are bulky and hard to move in, leading to exhaustion.

—The Conversation

Govt launches safety portal for coal mines

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

To evaluate the safety conditions of coal companies, Amrit Lal Meena, Secretary of the Ministry of Coal, reviewed the progress of the National Coal Mines Safety Report Portal on Friday. Chairman of Coal India Limited (CIL), CMDs of CIL subsidiaries, and senior officials from the ministry were also present in the meeting. According to the Ministry of Coal, Meena highlighted the need for comprehensive safety audits across all coal mines, reaffirming the Ministry's goal of achieving "Zero Accident, Fail-Proof Safety." With numerous hazards in coal mining, stringent safety protocols are crucial. Coal companies are committed to implementing a robust safety policy in line with their vision and mission.The National Coal Mines Safety Report Portal represents a major advancement in safety management. *—ANI*

Birla HIL Pipes launch new leak-proof solution

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

Birla HIL Pipes, part of the USD 3-billion CK Birla group, has launched a new leak-proof solution in the pipe and fittings segment as part of its strategy to bring more value-added products to address price volatility and premiumise the portfolio. Birla HIL Pipes, which provides home and building material solutions, in a statement, said the company is introducing more value-added products, which will help it address the price volatility witnessed in the April-June quarter. The company has launched TrueFiT leak-proof technology, which will significantly reduce the need for frequent repairs and maintenance, it said. The CK Birla group company reported a 9 per cent growth in revenue in the April-June quarter to Rs 1,107 crore compared to Rs 1,026 crore in the year-ago period. *—PTI*

Hero Motors file draft papers for ₹900 crore IPO

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

Hero Motors Ltd, the auto-components firm of the Hero Motors Company (HMC) Group, on Saturday filed preliminary papers with markets regulator Sebi to raise Rs 900 crore through an initial public offering (IPO). The IPO is a combination of a fresh issue of equity shares worth Rs 500 crore and an Offer-For-Sale (OFS) of shares valued at Rs 400 crore by promoters, according to the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP). The OFS includes Rs 250 crore worth of shares by OP Munjal Holdings, and Rs 75 crore each by Bhagyoday Investments and Hero Cycles. The company may consider a pre-IPO placement of Rs 100 crore. Proceeds from the fresh issue to the tune of Rs 202 crore will be used for debt payment, Rs 124 crore for purchase of equipment required for expansion in capacity of the company's facility in Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh. Hero Motors' revenue stood Rs 1,064.4 crore. *—PTI*

COGNIZANT SUES INFOSYS OVER TRADE SECRETS

Cognizant says Infosys stole data to make competing software

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

IT major Cognizant's subsidiary TriZetto has slapped a lawsuit on Infosys in a US federal court, accusing the Bengaluru-headquartered company of stealing trade secrets and information related to healthcare insurance software.

Infosys, in a statement, denied all allegations. The company asserted it is aware of the lawsuit and will defend its position in the court.

Cognizant in a lawsuit filed in Texas federal court has accused Infosys of illegally accessing data from TriZetto's software -- Facets and QNXT -- and using the same to develop and market a competing product.

Cognizant offerings include TriZetto's Facets and QNXT, which healthcare insurance firms use to automate tasks. Teaneck, New Jersey-based Cognizant has the bulk of its employees in India.

Cognizant has reportedly alleged that Infosys misused TriZetto's software to create "Test Cases for Facets," which repackaged its data into an Infosys product.

Further, it has reportedly alleged that Infosys created software to extract data from QNXT, that contained confidential TriZetto information.

It is interesting to note that just this week, Cognizant named former Infosys executive Rajesh Varrier as global head of operations and India Chairman and Managing Director, following the resignation of Rajesh Nambiar, who is set to take over as Nasscom president.

Moreover, Cognizant's Chief Executive Officer Ravi Kumar S is also an Infosys veteran, whose 20-year career at the Bengaluru-based firm saw him holding various leadership roles, including as President from January 2016 through October 2022. *—PTI*

Infosys denied all allegations and will defend its position in the court *PHOTO: PTI*

- Cognizant has reportedly alleged that Infosys misused TriZetto's software to create "Test Cases for Facets," which repackaged its data into an Infosys product

TELCOS TARGET 10% SHARE

Scindia asks telcos to take lead in 6G development

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

Union Telecom Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia along with Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani, Minister of State for Communications, chaired the second meeting of the recently established Stakeholders Advisory Committee (SAC) on Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) on Friday.

According to the Ministry of Communications, this initiative by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) aims to involve all stakeholders in shaping and expanding India's telecommunication ecosystem, promoting inclusive and collaborative policy-making.

In the first SAC meeting on TSPs, key focus areas were identified. In this session, discussions revolved around international standards, India's role in Intellectual Property and Standard Essential Patent (SEP), connectivity gaps, and the quality of telecom services.

SAC members stressed the importance of aligning research with 'India's needs' and establishing a dynamic standards community. India has already launched initiatives such as the Bharat6G Vision and Bharat6G Alliance, supported patent and IPR frameworks, and commissioned testbeds, positioning the country to aim for 10 per cent of global 6G patents and a significant contribution to international standards.

Indian telecom players are targeting a share of 10 per cent of all 6G patents and one-sixth contributions to global standards in the next three years.

These committees are designed to facilitate ongoing dialogue between the government and industry leaders, , researchers, , and start-ups, ensuring a continuous exchange of ideas and strategies to advance sector. *—ANI*

Jyotiraditya Scindia *PHOTO: PTI*

Zydus to acquire 50% stake in Sterling Biotech

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

Zydus Lifesciences on Saturday said it has inked a pact with Perfect Day Inc to acquire 50 per cent stake in Sterling Biotech.

As part of the deal, Perfect Day Inc, a Temasek portfolio company, will sell its 50 per cent shareholding in Sterling Biotech for an undisclosed amount. Post the transaction, Sterling Biotech will become a 50:50 joint venture with equal representation on the Board, Zydus Lifesciences said in a statement. Financial details of the deal were not shared.

The JV will establish a manufacturing facility to manufacture fermented animal-free protein to cater to the global markets, it added.

The acquisition also marks Zydus' foray into specialised biotech products for health and nutrition, specifically catering to consumers who prefer animal-free protein or suffer from lactose intolerance, the Gujarat-based firm said.

Perfect Day's precision-fermented protein is found in ice creams, cream cheese, sports nutrition products, and baked goods with high functionality benefits and lower environmental impact.

Sterling Biotech is currently engaged in manufacturing and sale of fermentation-based API products and gelatine.

The collaboration with Perfect Day creates a win-win combination that leverages both strengths and expertise to create value for the consumers, he added.

Perfect Day Interim CEO Narayan TM said, this partnership allows the company to significantly boost its capabilities to meet the demands of the fast-growing global market. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

INFLOW REMAINS NEGATIVE

Foreign investors buy equity worth ₹4,897 cr in Indian mkt

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

Foreign investors made a notable return to the Indian stock market this week.

The foreign investors made a net purchase of equities amounting to Rs 4,897.16 crore, according to data from the National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL).

This marks a significant shift from the previous week, when foreign portfolio investors were net sellers, offloading equities OF Rs 7,769.73 crore.

Despite this week's positive inflow, the overall net investment by foreign investors in August remains negative.

So far this month, foreign investors have sold equities worth Rs 16,305 crore in the Indian market. This trend highlights the volatility in foreign investment patterns.

Interestingly, while foreign investors were net sellers in August, domestic investors played a crucial role in supporting Indian stock market.

According to official data from the National Stock Exchange (NSE), domestic investors have consistently bought into Indian stocks, purchasing equities worth Rs 47,080.38 crore in August. This strong domestic participation has provided stability to the market amid the fluctuating foreign investment trends.

Earlier in July, net foreign investments in the Indian stock market reached Rs 32,365 crore as the foreign investors were net buyers, as per data from the National Securities Depository Limited.

This marked a continuation of strong foreign interest following, when Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) purchased stocks worth Rs 26,565 crore on a cumulative basis. *—ANI*

In August, foreign investors sold equities worth Rs 16,305 crore *PHOTO: ANI*

PHOTO: PTI

AMAZON TO REDUCE 12% IN SELLING FEES AHEAD OF FESTIVALS

MUMBAI, 24 AUG

Amazon India on Saturday announced an up to 12 per cent reduction in selling fees across multiple product categories on the marketplace ahead of the festive season.

The reductions in fees, which is effective from 9 September, will enable sellers to expand their product portfolio on the platform besides providing a boost to growth, Amazon India said.

"With the changes, sellers on Amazon India will benefit from a drop in selling fees, ranging from 3-12 per cent, across various product categories", the company said. *—PTI*

Domestic gold prices surge 10% amid global price rally

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

Domestic gold prices have risen by 10 per cent on a year-to-date basis on the back of the strength in global gold prices, which have surged by 18 per cent year-to-date, driven by robust central bank purchases, heightened geopolitical risks, and growing expectations of a monetary policy pivot from the US Federal Reserve, according to the World Gold Council.

The reduction in import duty has ignited a resurgence in gold demand across India. Reports from the recently concluded India International Jewellery Show indicate a substantial increase in order bookings from retailers, particularly in preparation for the upcoming festive and wedding season.

Manufacturers have noted that in some cases, orders have reached levels not seen in several years, underscoring the strong buying interest among jewellery retailers and consumers alike.

Despite these inflows, the total assets under management (AUM) for Indian gold ETFs grew marginally by 0.3 per cent from the previous month. *—ANI*

PHOTO: PTI

'India's gold loan mkt set for rapid growth'

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

The gold loan market in India is on the cusp of substantial growth, driven by rising per-gram gold rates and increasing customer demand. Currently, the market is predominantly controlled by the unorganized sector, which holds a 63 per cent share, while organized players, including banks and Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs), account for the remaining 37 per cent, according to a PwC report.

This presents a considerable opportunity for organized players to expand their presence and capture a larger portion of the market.

Indian households are estimated to possess approximately 25,000 tonnes of gold, valued at around Rs 126 lakh crore. Despite this vast wealth, the existing gold loan market through organised channels is valued at just Rs 7.1 lakh crore.

The gold loan market in India has historically been dominated by the unorganised sector. However, in recent years, organised players, particularly NBFCs, have begun to gain market share.

India remains one of the world's largest consumers of gold, with total demand reaching 747 tonnes in 2023. However, this represented a 3 per cent decrease compared to the previous year, primarily due to the surge in gold prices, which dampened demand for gold jewellery.

Globally, the demand for gold grew by 3 per cent in 2023, with China emerging as the largest market. The global market's expansion presents opportunities for Indian gold loan financiers to explore new avenues for growth beyond domestic borders. *—ANI*

Indian households are estimated to possess approximately 25,000 tonnes of gold, valued at around Rs 126 lakh crore *PHOTO: ANI*

- Globally, the demand for gold grew by 3 per cent in 2023, with China emerging as the largest market. The global market's expansion presents opportunities for Indian gold loan financiers to explore new avenues for growth beyond domestic borders

Hindustan Zinc to organise half-marathon

JAIPUR, 24 AUG

Hindustan Zinc Limited is set to organise half-marathon in its fight against hunger in Udaipur on 29 September, an official said. He said the marathon's theme 'Run For Zero Hunger' resonates with the philosophy of giving back to society, aligning with the broader goal of combating hunger. "Marathon is about inspiring a healthier India and contributing to the noble fight against hunger. With categories including the half marathon (21 kilometres), Cool Run (10 kilometres), and Dream Run (five kilometres), the event will see professional and amateur runners from around the world. *—PTI*

TO ACHIEVE $14T ECONOMY

India needs 400M women in workforce

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

India requires an additional 400 million women in the workforce to contribute USD 14 trillion to the economy which would necessitate nearly doubling the current female labour force participation rate (LFPR) from 37 per cent to 70 per cent by fiscal year 2047, according to a new report.

Non-profit The/Nudge Institute has unveiled a new report, Labour Force Participation Distillation Report, outlining a crucial element for India's economic future. The report is based upon Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) over the years.

As the country aims to become a USD 30 trillion economy by 2047, the report highlights the need for a substantial increase in female labour force participation to achieve this goal.

According to the report, India requires an additional 400 million women in the workforce to contribute USD 14 trillion to the economy. This would necessitate nearly doubling the current female labour force participation rate (LFPR) from 37 per cent to 70 per cent by fiscal year 2047.

With only 110 million women projected to join the labour force by then, an additional 145 million women need to be integrated to meet this target.

The report reveals a stark disparity in job security and recovery between men and women.

Women were found to be seven times more likely to lose their jobs and eleven times more likely not to recover from job loss.

Women predominantly work in low-productivity sectors, such as agriculture and manufacturing, where they face limited advancement.

According to the report, in construction, women represent just over 12 per cent of the workforce, often earning significantly less than men in unskilled roles. *—PTI*

This would necessitate nearly doubling the current female labour force participation rate (LFPR) from 37 per cent to 70 per cent *PHOTO: PTI*

Textile exports to reach $65B by FY26: Invest India

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

India's textile industry is on the brink of expansion, with total textile exports projected to reach USD 65 billion by FY26, according to Invest India.

Invest India posted on X, "PM Modi's bold '#fibretofashion' vision is guiding the #textileindustry to become a driving force in the global market while bringing competence & technology to local players."

According to Invest India, the domestic textile market, valued at around USD 165 billion in 2022, includes USD 125 billion from domestic sales and USD 40 billion from exports. Projections indicate that the market will grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 10 per cent to reach USD 350 billion by 2030.

The textile industry is also a major employment driver, providing direct jobs to 45 million individuals and an additional 100 million in related sectors.

India is one of the world's largest producers of textiles and apparel, contributing approximately 2.3 per cent to the country's GDP, 13 per cent to industrial production, and 12 per cent to exports. *—ANI*

PHOTO: PTI

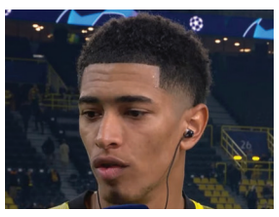


PHOTO: X@aritrabvb1909

Madrid star Jude 'frustrated' after sustaining leg injury

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

Real Madrid ace Jude Bellingham has been left "frustrated" after he sustained a muscle injury in his right leg, which will keep him out for a couple of weeks. Bellingham suffered an injury in his right leg's plantaris muscle while training before Los Blancos' upcoming match against Real Valladolid in La Liga. Due to the injury, Bellingham has also been ruled out of England's Nations League fixtures against Ireland and Finland. He said, "Nothing I hate more than missing games but trying to see the positive side and maybe my body is telling me it needs a bit more rest after a busy year. I'm very frustrated but I'll be supporting the lads like a fan until I can rejoin them again in my best and strongest form. Thanks for your messages of concern and support. Lots of love and Hala Madrid!" Speaking at the pre-match press conference, Real Madrid's head coach Carlo Ancelotti revealed that Belingham's injury isn't "toocomplicated." *—ANI*

India gets 1st ever quota for 2026 Asian Games

THULUSDHOO, 24 AUG

The Indian surfing team has secured its first-ever quota for the 2026 Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan with a spot each for men and women. Participating in the Asian Surfing Championships here, the quota was awarded to India based on the total ranking points accumulated by its surfers in the event. While Kishore Kumar missed out narrowly in stiff competition on Saturday after making it to the semi-finals of the U-18 Boys category, his stunning performance throughout the competition -- finishing first in Round 1, Round 3, and the quarter-finals -- earned India the Asian Games quota. The Asian Surfing Championships, a qualifier for the Asian Games, had eight Indian surfers compete in four categories. Meanwhile, Harish Muthu also left his mark by becoming the first Indian to qualify for the Asian Surfing Championships quarter-finals before falling short after a rigid contest. *—PTI*

Badminton c'ships: Tanvi enters U-15 girls singles final

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

India's top junior shuttler Tanvi Patri registered a dominating win over Thailand's Kungkaew Kakanik to reach the U-15 girls singles final at the Badminton Asia U-17 & U-15 junior championships in Chengdu, China on Saturday. Patri, seeded no. 1, was made to work hard in the opening game before the Indian prevailed 21-19 21-10 over sixth seed Kakanik in just 31 minutes. In the final, she will face second seed Nguyen Thi Thu Huygen of Vietnam, who got the better of China's Liu Yu Tong 21-18, 17-21, 21-19 in the other semifinal. Samiya Imad Farooqui had won the U-15 girls singles crown in 2017 and Tasnim Mir was victorious in the same category in 2019. *—PTI*

US midfielder McKennie to stay at Juventus until 2026

TURIN, 24 AUG

United States midfielder Weston McKennie has a signed a contract extension to stay at Juventus until June 2026, the Italian club said Friday. McKennie had a team-high 10 assists in all competitions for Juventus last season and has scored 13 goals for the club since joining in 2020. He spent the second half of the 2022-23 season on loan at Leeds, which was then in the Premier League. *—AP*

STUMPS FOR DHAWAN

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

A bit of selfishness, they say, is a necessary trait in the make-up of elite athletes. But Shikhar Dhawan remained an altruist through a career punctuated with innumerable bursts of brilliance, an outlook that was at times annoyingly positive, and without hyperbolic excesses.

Out of the India setup for a while, the pragmatic 38-year-old, who in his pomp left the best of bowlers helpless and in awe, reached an agreement with his fate and retired from all forms of cricket.

Tenacity, resourcefulness, selflessness and the willingness to sacrifice for the team's sake defined his international career, his time in the Indian Premier League and his outings on the domestic circuit.

Scroll through his social media pages and one would struggle to find a cryptic tweet after being ignored by India selectors.

No sly digs, no sarcasm-laden posts, no frills -- that's not how he operated even while he was facing upheavals in his personal life.

Incidentally, the last time India won an ICC title -- the 2013 Champions Trophy in England -- Dhawan played a vital role and won the player of the tournament award for his exploits at the top of the order in seaming conditions.

Indian cricket's 'Gabbar', who made the thigh-clap celebration his trademark, didn't enjoy a memorable beginning to his international career, getting dismissed for a two-ball duck against Australia in an ODI in Visakhapatnam.

However, after the initial struggles in top-flight, Dhawan returned to the Indian team in 2013 and cemented his place across all three formats with some scintillating performances. Along with Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, he formed an unmatched triumvirate in the international white-ball formats from 2013 to 2019, though it's another matter that he is not going out after having built a towering legacy, something the other two would have when they bid adieu to the game.

All three peaked at the same time, and Dhawan was the most less talked-about one. One of the reasons for that could be the fact that all his good knocks would be interspersed with prolonged lean patches. Dhawan was also a standout performer in domestic cricket, becoming a star in the 2004 U-19 World Cup. However, it wasn't until 2013 that he truly captured the attention of the Indian public.

—PTI

> **I tell myself, don't be sad that you won't play for India again but be happy that you played for your country. And that's the biggest thing for me, that I played**
>
> —Sikhar Dhawan, Indian batsman

Shikhar Dhawan with his player of the tournament and golden bat awards in 2013 ICC Champions trophy tournament

Shikhar Dhawn with his iconic thigh five celebration

DHAWAN'S TOP FIVE KNOCKS

187 vs Australia, Mohali, 2013 Test

114 vs South Africa, Cardiff, 2013 ICC Champions Trophy

137 vs South Africa, Melbourne, 2015 World Cup

117 vs Australia, The Oval, 2019 World Cup

190 vs Sri Lanka, Galle, 2017 Test

RECORDS OF 'GABBAR'

TESTS	
Matches	34
Runs	2,315
Average	40.61
Highest	190
Strike rate	66.95
50s/100s	5/7

ODIS	
Matches	164
Runs	6,793
Average	44.11
Highest	143
Strike rate	91.35
50s/100s	39/17

T20IS	
Matches	66
Runs:	1,759
Average	27.92
Highest	92
Strike rate	126.36
50s/100s	11/0

Sinner fires 2 of his team members over his positive steroid tests

Jannik Sinner PHOTO: X@ALKASS_DIGITAL

NEW YORK, 24 AUG

Jannik Sinner fired his fitness trainer and physiotherapist because of his two positive steroid tests in March and said Friday at his pre-US Open news conference — his first public comments on the matter — that he knew he was innocent but worried what the case's outcome would be until finding out he wouldn't be suspended.

Sinner's fitness trainer, Umberto Ferrara, and his physiotherapist, Giacomo Naldi, have been at the 23-year-old Italian's side during his rise over the past two years, which included his first Grand Slam title at the Australian Open in January and ascension to the No. 1 ranking in June.

The investigation found that Sinner had a trace amount of the steroid in his system, a point he illustrated Friday by using eight fingers to count out the number of zeroes before the "1" in the amount: .000000001".

"Obviously it has been a very tough moment for me and my team," Sinner said. "It still is, because it's quite fresh."

Play begins Monday at Flushing Meadows. Sinner is the top-seeded man and is scheduled to meet first-round opponent Mackie McDonald, an American ranked 140th, on Tuesday.

"Of course it's not ideal before a Grand Slam," Sinner said with a chuckle about the timing of the news. "But in my mind, I know that I haven't done anything wrong. I had to play, already, (for) months with this in my head, but just (was reminding) myself that I haven't done really anything wrong. I always respect these rules — and I always will respect these rules — of anti-doping."

"I'm not feeling that confident to continue with them," Sinner said. "Now I just need some clean air." The International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA) announced this week that Sinner failed two drug tests — one during a tournament in Indian Wells, California, and one eight days later — but that it was determined the banned anabolic steroid Clostebol entered his system unintentionally through a massage from Naldi.

—AP

SAFF C'ships: India U17 gear up for Indonesia challenge

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

The Indian men's U17 team is gearing up to face Indonesia in two friendly matches in Bali on Sunday and next Tuesday.

On Friday night the Blue Colts played a practice match against local side Bali United FC U20 at the Samudra Kuta Stadium, which ended in a 2-2 draw. Mohammad Sami and Mohammad Arbash scored the goals for India. Coached by Ishfaq Ahmed, India U17s are preparing for next month's SAFF U17 Championship, to be held in Bhutan, and the subsequent AFC U17 Asian Cup Qualifiers, which will be hosted by Thailand in October.

They had been training in Srinagar for over a month and a half before their trip to Indonesia. "We tried and tested our entire squad in yesterday's practice match," said Ahmed. "The main eleven only played in the last 25 minutes. The other players got the chance to play and I'm really happy about that.

"Bali United are one of the top teams here and they had five players from the Indonesia national U20 team, so we could compete physically with them and judge our level. "The training facilities here are nice. Everything has been top class, which is ideal for us to prepare for the main tournaments coming up. The climate is pleasant. The hosts have been really helpful, accommodating all our requests. So far, so good here," the coach added.

However, being an island, Bali is more humid. The Blue Colts have also had to adjust from training in the artificial pitch at the TRC Ground in Srinagar to the natural grass pitches in Indonesia, but that isn't much of an issue, according to Ahmed. *—PTI*

Pedro's goal gives Brighton 2-1 win

BRIGHTON, 24 AUG

Joao Pedro headed home in the fifth minute of injury time to give Brighton a 2-1 win over Manchester United on Saturday and renew the scrutiny on manager Erik ten Hag.

After United failed to clear a corner, Pedro was on hand to head home a cross from Simon Adingra to secure a second straight victory for Brighton at the start of the season under new coach Fabian Hurzeler.

It's a result that will be extra tough for United to take as the visitors had a potential winner ruled out in the 70th minute for an almost comical offside.

Alejandro Garnacho's shot from a tight angle was heading into an empty net when it deflected off the knee of the sliding Joshua Zirkzee just before it crossed the line – causing the goal to be ruled out as the Dutch striker was in an offside position. *—AP*

PSG rout Montpellier 6-0 to continue impressive start

PARIS, 24 AUG

Paris Saint-Germain seems to be doing just fine without Kylian Mbappe. PSG routed Montpellier 6-0 on Friday to make it two wins in two games in the French league as it starts life without Mbappe, who left for Real Madrid this offseason. PSG is seeking its fourth straight league title but many had expected its grip on the trophy to loosen after the departure of its star forward. *—AP*

Barely got to train with Manu, says Sarabjot

BENGALURU, 24 AUG

Sarabjot Singh, who partnered with Manu Bhaker to win India's first ever Olympic medal in a mixed shooting event, on Saturday said they "barely" got to train together in the run-up to their event.

Bhaker and Sarabjot scripted history with a bronze medal in the 10m air pistol mixed team shooting event at the Paris Games. "My training was due at 9, hers was due at 12, individually. Mixed session lasted for 30 minutes, before which she trained separately, and I separately.

"Our conversation was usually brief and limited to 'Apna 100 per cent dena hai (we have to give our 100 per cent)'. Apart from that, we enjoyed some banter. Sometimes I would make fun of her, sometimes she would of me," recalled Sarabjot. Sarabjot also revealed his longtime fandom for Yusuf Dikec and said he has been looking up to the Turkish shooting icon for inspiration since 2011.

"I have been watching his (Yusuf's) videos since 2011. He has always been like this. He is 51 today. Even though I have tried, I could not match his perfection. If I had the chance, I would ask him what he eats?," said the 22-year-old from Dheen village of Haryana during an interview with PUMA India. Sarabjot said that his pistol is engraved with SSINGH30, comprising his initials and a significant date in his journey.Meditation, and a rare yogic technique called Trataka, helped him. "The main technique is to look at the candle flame with eyes open for three minutes, and then imagine for two minutes. I used to keep it directly in front of my eyes. *—PTI*

Sarabjot Singh PHOTO: PTI

Bangladesh take 94-run lead in 1st test against Pak

RAWALPINDI, 24 AUG

Mushfiqur Rahim dug in to score a superb 191 and share a record stand with Mehidy Hasan Miraz as Bangladesh nullified Pakistan's pace attack in the first test on Saturday.

Mushfiqur's 11th test hundred, and first against Pakistan, came in more than 8-1/2 hours and lifted Bangladesh to 565 all out on Day 4. It was Bangladesh's third highest score away from home, as Pakistan's ploy to go with four fast bowlers failed to work on a greenish wicket that eased considerably for batting. Pakistan, which made 448-6 declared in its first innings, lost opener Saim Ayub early in its second and was 23-1 at stumps, trailing by 94 runs. Abdullah Shafique was not out on 12 while captain Shan Masood was unbeaten on 9. Mushfiqur's marathon 341-ball knock, featuring 22 fours and a six, ended in the final session. *—AP*

PARIS IS CALLING

Have sacrificed a lot in my personal life: Paralympian Suhas

NEW DELHI, 24 AUG

His eyes firmly set on the top-podium finish in Paris after missing gold in the last edition of the Paralympic Games, para badminton player Suhas LY is hoping to bring smiles on the faces of his family, which has sacrificed a lot as he has pursued his goal with single-minded determination for the last three years.

A 2007 batch IAS officer, Suhas won the silver (SL-4 category) at the Tokyo Paralymics. He served as the District Magistrate of Gautam Buddh Nagar during the Covid times and was also the DM of Prayagraj. An Ajuna awardee, Suhas is currently posted as the secretary and director-general of Youth Welfare and Prantiya Rakshak Dal, a department under the Uttar Pradesh government.

Suhas admits the journey to become the best in the business has not been easy. "I have sacrificed my personal life a lot. I dedicated my personal life to sports. In the last six months, besides my job, I have been devoting considerable time to my sport," Suhas told PTI in an interview ahead of the upcoming Paralympic Games in Paris, where he is a medal prospect.

"You cannot get everything in life, everyone has to prioritise things when you aspire to represent the country.You should enjoy whatever you are doing. Enjoy the process. "The real secret is to enjoy what you do," he added.

Suhas is married to Ritu Suhas, a PCS officer currently posted as ADM (Administration) in Ghaziabad. His daughter Saanvi is five-years-old and son Vivaan is two-years-old. *—PTI*

Suhas LY PHOTO: X@OLYMPICKHEL